

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW COMPLETION RATES OF NATIONAL
CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL (NCV) STUDENTS AT A TVET COLLEGE IN
THE NORTHWEST PROVINCE**

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MATSHWENYEGO DOROTHY NTHAKO

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DECLARATION

Name: MATSHWENYEGO DOROTHY NTHAKO

Student number: 47896299

Degree: MASTER OF EDUCATION

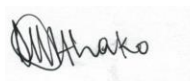
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SIGNATURE

MD NTHAKO

13 January 2020

DATE

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ABSTRACT

This study was interested in investigating the factors contributing to low completion rates at a TVET college in the North-West Province. There is not much research conducted on the low completion rates at TVET Colleges in South Africa. The study sought to explore the understanding of completion rates at TVET Colleges, the current completion rates and the causes and the strategies that might be employed to increase the completion rates.

Qualitative methodology was used to collect data, using semi-structured interviews for all the focus group interviews. Collected data were transcribed, interpreted, analysed and the findings were presented. The study revealed that factors contributing to the low completion rates are finance and management issues, staff problems, policy factors, socio-economic factors and students' personal factors that require attention in order to increase the completion rates. These include lecturer qualifications, student funding, inadequate infrastructure, drug and substance abuse, involvement of stakeholders and lack of adherence to policies.

The study recommends proper administration of students' bursaries, effective Quality Management System (QMS), lecturer development, adequate infrastructure and efficient policies to be implemented.

The study might draw the attention of the DHET, the college management and other stakeholders in order to come up with interventions to remedy the low completion rates at TVET Colleges.

KEY TERMS:

Completion rates, Technical Vocational Education and Training College (TVET), National Certificate Vocational (NCV), National Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), pass rates, graduation rates, attendance rates

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
DECA	Dayton Early College Academy
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DHRT	Department of Human Resource and Technology
DoE	Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
HoD	Head of Department
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
ICASS	Internal Continuous Assessment
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KZN	Kwa- Zulu Natal
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NBPTS	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
QMS	Quality Management
SRC	Students Representative Council
SSS	Student Support Services
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

According to Umalusi (2013), the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) was implemented by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in 2007. The NCV curriculum comprises of seven subjects per level, with three compulsory fundamental subjects, which are, English First Additional Language, Life Orientation and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy and four core or vocational subjects. To obtain the NCV qualification, students need to obtain 40 per cent in the two fundamental compulsory subjects, which are, the required official language and life orientation. They also need to obtain 30 per cent in Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy that is another compulsory fundamental module. Furthermore, they then need to obtain 50 per cent in all four vocational subjects.

The White Paper (2013) states that the NCV targets young people completing Grade 9. Those who have completed Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 can register at a TVET College and start with NCV Level 2. This means that those who have already completed a Matric qualification, for example, will be at the same class as someone with a Grade 9. Therefore, they have to redo specific subjects even though they would have already passed them. Kraak, Paterson and Boka (2016) state that many learners in NCV do not meet the mandatory requirements and are unable to complete the lower level to proceed to the next level. They might have passed a few of the seven modules in each NCV level but still do not qualify to complete the full qualification. Kraak, Paterson and Boka (ibid), further allude that the admission requirements create a mix up of grades in the class. For instance, Grade 12 learners attending the same level as Grade 9 are all accommodated at the same level.

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), post school education statistics (2015), the national completion rates in all the nine provinces for the NCV level 2 was 45, 5% and Level 3 was 46, 6% and Level 4 was 41, 7%.

According to the Department of Human Resource and Technology (2007), the TVET Colleges in Africa have systems that are different from one country to the other and are delivered at different levels in different types of institutions. In all of Sub-Saharan Africa, formal TVET programmes are based at schools and students can access the vocational

education after completing primary school. In countries such as Burkina Faso and Kenya, they can access vocational education at about six to eight years of age. The vocational education in these countries has the reputation of being a dead end so far as academic progression is concerned. It is only fit for students who are unable to progress to higher education. Parents and the public regard vocational education as fit for those who are academically challenged.

The report by DHRT (2007), argues that in many countries, students entering the vocational stream find it challenging to complete their qualifications. The report further states that the vision of the African Union (AU) is to create an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa driven by its own people to take the rightful place in the global community and academic economy. The African Union recognises the importance of TVET as a means to empower individuals to take control of their lives and recommends the integration of vocational training into the general education stream. The AU emphasises the importance of quality TVET that is responsive to the needs of the labour market and delivered in collaboration with industry and prospective employers.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The DHET, curriculum planners and education practitioners might use the study to identify possible causes of the low completion rates at TVET Colleges to develop a plan on how to improve the status quo. This study sought to provide information, guidelines and intervention strategies that might be employed to improve the low certification rates.

1.3 LITERATURE PREVIEW

The literature preview is a pioneer to the literature review was outlined in detail in Chapter Two. Chapter Two touched on the factors that contribute to the low completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West province, which is the primary purpose of this research. It gave a reflection of the impact of low completion rates at the college. The factors contributing to the low completion rates of NCV students were made explicit by referring to various researchers and theorists.

Balkrishen and Mestry (2016) mention that institutions that are performing well are successful because the leaders possess strong leadership and communication skills. These

types of leaders are able to create and communicate high performance expectations to students and staff. TVET College campus managers need to possess skills to create these expectations, communicate them to staff and students and provide support in order for these expectations to be achieved.

Balkrishen and Mestry (2016) state that the campus manager of a TVET College is accountable for enforcing quality teaching and learning. The researcher, in Chapter Two, looked into the management of the college as one of the possible contributing factors to low completion rates. According to Mtwesi (2017), the issue of enrolment numbers, infrastructure, governance, accountability and lecturer qualifications should also be looked into.

Related literature was reviewed looking at studies from different countries, aiming at providing answers to the main research question about the low completion rates at the TVET College. Tushar (2013) reveals that in some regions such as Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, TVET is referred to as Vocational Education and Training, and it is incorporated into the main- stream schooling.

According to Paxton (2012), in Rwanda, the TVET system has three vocational education levels. These are primarily aimed at pupils between seven to nine years and technical education which is taught as the main TVET option. Training at these schools takes three years and the student will, on completion, be awarded a craftsman's certificate. Graduates with this certificate can proceed to further their studies at universities and technical colleges, which are the third level in the Rwandan system.

The research also looked at policies that govern the completion rates at TVET Colleges. For example, the Internal Continuous Assessment Guideline (2018) that stipulates the assessment tasks that are to be written, the dates of the assessments and the weighting of these assessments per task and the DHET attendance and punctuality policy (2015), which regulates the attendance and punctuality of students.

The researcher also looked into the National Students Financial Aid Scheme guideline (2018), which should reflect on the students' funding norms and standards. Over and above these policy documents, the researcher looked at the existing literature on what is going on

at the TVET Colleges, the challenges these colleges face and the recommendations for improved completion rates from the studies that have already been conducted.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework in a study is based on existing theory or theories. This study aimed to explore the perceptions of students and lecturers with regard to the factors contributing to low completion rates.

Molefe and Stears (2014), define theory as a set of interrelated constructs, definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of the phenomenon by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting phenomena. Molefe and Stears (ibid), further explain a framework as a set of ideas that one uses when one is forming a decision and judgement.

De Vos and Strydom (2011) refer to a theoretical framework as a process that determines which questions are to be answered by the research and how empirical procedures are to be used as tools for finding answers to these questions.

For this study, the researcher chose to employ the Systems Theory, as it was found to be the most relevant for this study. O'Leary (2007) explains that the Systems Theory is about trying to understand the relationships that make up all the systems. Take for example, a family setting, a systematic approach to understanding families requires that one understands the relationships of the different roles in the family, for example, father, mother and child, and how the relationship of these roles affects the family and not just to understand the roles only. In simpler terms, the Systems Theory pays attention to relationships among elements of a system and not just the elements as isolated parts.

According to Luhman and Cunliffe (2013), Systems Theory is how organisational activities follow a process of taking inputs from the setting within which it is operating. As well as change those inputs using the organisation's structure, norms and standards, to create an accomplishment for the organisation.

Bevir (2009) argues that the application of the Systems Theory to governance generates several different approaches to how systems are managed. Bevir (ibid), further states that the

Systems Theory highlights the effect of relationships between governors and those between public and private actors, and between institutions and the social forces they regulate.

The researcher, therefore, employed the Systems Theory to investigate the factors contributing to low completion rates at a TVET College in the North-West Province and categorise them accordingly.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Umalusi (2007), NCV curricula, since it was implemented in 2007, has shown evidence of low completion rates in NQF L2, L3 and L4. Mtwesi (2017) suggests that the decrease in completion rates at TVET Colleges emanates from the increase in enrolment numbers. Completion rates for NCV Level 4 have decreased from 42.8% in 2011 to 39.3% in 2012, 37.1% in 2013 and 34.5% in 2014. Mtwesi (2017) says that these low completion rates can be attributed to pressure on resources, lecturers that are not adequately trained and do not have a good grasp of the curriculum, lack of accountability from accounting officers, poor governance, underfunding and poor infrastructure. Mtwesi (2017) argues that TVET Colleges are overstretched, they cannot be enlarged without proper resources and proper educational and administrative staff. Additionally, increasing enrolment rapidly without attending to resources, human capital and relevance is a set up for failure.

Branson and Hofmeyr (2015) report in the study they conducted in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, TVET Colleges are viewed as low status and regarded as an alternative route for learners who are academically challenged.

The low completion rates are a global concern. Tushar (2013) states that there are 17 ministries administering Vocational Education and Training programmes in India. The programmes are offered at secondary, higher secondary levels, and some programmes are also offered at the pre-secondary level. Vocational education is offered at school level in Grades 11 and 12 in the formal schooling cycle. There are also the institution-based training programmes that fall outside the formal schooling cycle, which is mainly provided through public Industrial Training Institutes, Private Industrial Training Centres and Polytechnics, both public and private. Tushar (2013) found out that in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa, 41%, 35% and 16.2% of completion rates were respectively achieved.

According to the DHRT (2007), young people in Africa drop out of school before they have acquired any practical skills and required competencies for the world of work. Completion rates are 80-90 % for primary school, 30-40% for lower or junior secondary school and about 20% for senior secondary school. In Ghana, 49, 1% of the workforce is illiterate, and only 3, 9% have had vocational training. In Tanzania, less than five per cent of the labour force is educated above primary school.

The evidence presented in the above studies shows that there is a serious challenge with the completion rates in the TVET sector, hence, this research, which sought to determine factors contributing to low completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West Province.

This research sought to answer the following questions:

Research Question

How can the completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West province be improved?

Sub- Questions

- What is the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College?
- What are the current completion rates at the TVET College?
- What are the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NCV students at TVET Colleges in the North-West Province?

Research Aim

To improve the completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West Province.

Research Objectives

- To determine the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College.
- To explore the current completion rates at the TVET College.
- To determine the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West Province.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.6.1. Paradigm

Cresswell (2015) explains that a paradigm is a way of looking at or viewing something or a set of beliefs that guide action. The researcher in this study chose to use the interpretivist approach that utilises more open-ended research questions. The more open-ended the questions, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what the participants say or do in their life setting. The researcher made the interpretation of the data, and interpretation shaped by their experiences and background in order to make sense of meanings others have about the world.

According to Cresswell (2015), the interpretivist approach uses a small number of participants, focuses on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the cultural settings of the participants. This author says this is the reason why qualitative research is often called interpretive research. According to Kothari (2004), qualitative research assesses attitudes, opinions and underlying behaviour. Qualitative research investigates why people do certain things. The qualitative approach is evidently relevant to this research as it allows the participants to reflect their perceptions and perspectives on factors contributing to the low completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West Province.

1.6.2 Research design

Zikmund (2003) states that a research design is a master plan that outlines the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information. A qualitative research design was used since qualitative research focuses on individuals' social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. The researcher chose to use the qualitative research design in order to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations of participants and explore their views and ideas regarding the factors contributing to the low completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West Province.

Creswell (2016) recognises that the fundamental feature of qualitative research is to develop understanding and requires that people approach research from a perspective that may be different than what they have previously learnt. Therefore, the researcher paid much focus on acquiring the understanding that the participants hold with regard to the issue at hand and not the meaning that the researcher brings to research or that which is expressed in literature.

The Heads of Departments (HoDs) and lecturers were interviewed in their natural setting, where they felt comfortable and during the time they and the researcher agreed upon that. The researcher used one-on-one, face-to-face interviews according to the schedule agreed upon by all parties. For students' focus group interviews, the researcher recommended the Students Representative Council (SRC) boardroom, as this venue made the students to feel safe and comfortable at the time agreed upon by all parties. Signage was put on the door to indicate that there was an interview in progress. Communication skills such as a verbal response, paraphrasing, reflecting, questions, clarifying, interpreting, confronting, informing, summarising, and processing were used.

1.7. SAMPLING

Purposive sampling was used to choose NCV students to participate in the study. Dudovskiy (2018) defines purposive sampling as a sampling strategy in which the researcher depends upon his or her judgement when choosing members of the population to participate in the study and that it is the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling method. The population of the study consisted of a total number of 729 students, with 482 in L2, 237 in L3, 180 in L4, 12 HoDs and 65 lecturers.

The researcher employed purposive sampling to choose , 12 NCV students from L3 and L4, 2 Heads of Departments (HoDs) and 2 lecturers; all from a TVET College in the North-West Province. The participants were over 18 years of age, selected from L3 and L4 with six participants from L3 and six participants from L4.

1.8 DATA COLLECTION

According to Hox and Boije (2005), data collection involves collecting a large amount of data on a rather small, purposive sample, using techniques such as in-depth interviews, participants' observation and focus groups.

Data were collected from 12 purposely- selected participants who were registered for the National Certificate (Vocational), NQF Level 3 and Level 4 as they had experience of being students at a TVET College and could have been able to provide insight into the research.

The participants also consisted of two HoDs as programme managers and two lecturers as they have a direct link or contact with students.

1.8.1. Semi-structured interviews

According to Kobus (2007), the semi-structured questions are done in the form of a conversation with the intention that the researcher explores participant perceptions, ideas, beliefs and attitudes about specific events or phenomena. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the HoDs in the comfort of their offices. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with lecturers; the researcher secured appointments with lecturers according to their schedules. The researcher drafted questions and posed them in the form of a conversation. Participants were allowed to express themselves freely.

The researcher's role was primarily that of an interviewer, and field notes were taken to record all verbal and non-verbal responses and the audio recorder was used to protect the interview against bias. Recording an interview is important because it provides a detailed analysis that is required by qualitative research and should be done in consultation with participants so that their privacy is protected. The sub-questions were interviewing questions for all participants where probing was used until there was saturation in terms of data collected.

1.8.2. Focus group interviews

Two focus group interviews with six participants each were conducted with 12 students from L3 and L4. The groups comprised of six participants from L3 and six participants from L4. The first interview was done with three students from L3 and three from L4, and the second interview followed the same process, which was, three students from L3 and three students from L4. All interviews held with students were audio- recorded. In addition, field notes were taken to back up the recording.

1.9. DATA ANALYSIS

According to Shamoo and Reshik (2003), data analysis is the process of systematically applying techniques to describe and illustrate, condense, recap and evaluate data. Data analysis brings order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. The researcher did data coding using Tesch's eight steps of collecting data in Creswell (2009). The data were not submitted in the original format but were interpreted and presented by the

researcher. Creswell (2009) puts it that during data analysis, the researcher follows a path of analysing the data to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of the topic being studied.

1.10. TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Shenton (2004), it is essential to ensure that the study measures what it is actually intended to measure and that the participants selected are accurately defined. In this study, where purposive sampling was used, the participants were chosen according to their experience, characteristics and the insight they have on the issue of students' low completion rates at a TVET College in the North-West Province. LaBanca (2010) defines trustworthiness as the demonstration that evidence for the results reported is sound when the argument is made, based on the results and is strong.

1.10.1. Credibility

According to Riege (2003), tests to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative data are essential to determine the stability and quality of the data obtained. Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, and Pearson (2014) mention that credibility evaluates whether there is a correlation between the author's interpretation and the data. The results of the research should be believable according to the views of the participants in the research. To ensure that the research findings are credible or believable, the researcher gave every member or participant a transcript to confirm its accuracy and to ensure stability in the research. Due to the researcher's passion and personal interest on the topic, the researcher guarded against biases as well as any preconceived ideas. This was done using multiple sources to enhance the credibility of the study.

1.10.2. Transparency

According to Moravcsik (2014), transparency is the cornerstone of social science. The researcher should make available the evidence or data used for scrutiny or to extend existing research. Data transparency affords readers access to the evidence or data used to support empirical research claims and allows scholars to assess research and speak to one another. In this research, data were safely kept where it could be easily accessed, in consultation with the researcher.

1.10.3. Dependability

Munn et al. (2014) states that dependability can be established if the research process is logical and can be measured by whether the research methods are suitable to answer the research question. Dependability refers to the provision of evidence such that if it were to be repeated with the same or similar participants in the same or similar context, its findings would be similar. The researcher attained this by recording the views of the participants verbatim so that they would be able to confirm that their responses were accurately captured.

1.10.4. Confirmability

Shenton (2004) argues that to achieve confirmability, the researcher must take steps to demonstrate that the findings emanate from the data and not their own tendencies. Confirmability guarantees that the findings, conclusions and recommendations are supported by the data and that there is an internal agreement between the researcher's interpretation and the actual evidence. The researcher wrote the views of participants in italics to separate them from the interpretation and to represent the voice of the participant.

1.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi and Cheraghi,. (2014), the established relationship between the researchers and participants in qualitative studies can raise a range of different ethical concerns. Some critical ethical concerns that should be taken into account, while conducting qualitative research, are anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent. In this research, the researcher explained the study to the participants, the risks involved and that they were free to withdraw from the study if they felt the need to do so. The participants were provided with consent forms to sign.

Confidentiality was ensured by not using the participants' real names. Participants were named using alphabets or numbers to secure their identity. Justice was maintained by ensuring that each member gave a fair and equal chance of participating, especially when it came to answering questions. The researcher explained to the participants that they were free to request the removal of the data given without giving any reasons.

Sanjari et al. (2014) emphasises that participants should always be made aware of the information that has been obtained and recorded and consent to it. Therefore, the researcher gave on-going feedback to participants to ensure that there were mutual understanding and

agreement of the recorded information and at the same time take into consideration the participants' right to privacy.

1.12. PRELIMINARY CHAPTER OUTLINE

1.12.1. Chapter 1

In Chapter One, the introduction and background of the research, and the challenges the college is facing are discussed. It comprised of the research aims and objectives, the reason for the study that emanated from the problem statement, the research framework, research methodology and design that was used in this research.

1.12.2. Chapter 2

In Chapter Two, the literature review reflected on the necessity of improving the completion rates in the college. It highlighted the importance of improving the completion rates for the college to operate efficiently. Definitions by various theorists and researchers were discussed for the concepts to be easily understood.

1.12.3. Chapter 3

Chapter Three focused on the research design, methodology, and it incorporates the layout of the questionnaire, the population, instrument guide, the sampling process, the data collection process and data analysis.

1.12.4. Chapter 4

Chapter Four consists of presentations and discussions concerning the findings of the study on completion rates.

1.12.5. Chapter 5

Chapter Five focused on the closing remarks, recommendations and limitations of the study.

1.13. WORK SCHEDULE

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
1. Chapter One	Introduction of the study. Formulate research questions. Give an indication of the research design. Do Corrections

2. Chapter Two	Describe the outcomes of the literature review. Do corrections
3. Chapter Three	Discuss the research design. Do corrections
4. Chapter Four	Discuss the research findings
5. Chapter Five	Write the conclusion and recommendations. Do corrections

1.14. CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the study's preliminary framework. The background to the study, the objectives, aims and the research questions were the focus of this chapter. The research investigated the factors contributing to the low completion rates of NC (V) students at a TVET College in the North-West Province, the challenges this college is facing and it sought to discover ways how the completion rates can be managed and improved.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the factors that contribute to the low completion rates at a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in the North-West Province. This research study focused on the factors contributing to the low completion rates. The related literature review was based on the research aim and the sub-questions of the study, which sought to investigate the factors that contribute to the low completion rates of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) students at a TVET College in the North-West Province.

The results of students who are not able to complete their qualifications can be extremely poor, with a severe impact on their well-being. Students who are not able to complete their qualifications settle for anything to earn a living or to survive. The low completion rates at TVET Colleges are not the problem of the individual but have other cost implications; for example, the cost of social services.

The White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013) outlines the statistics of students who managed to complete their qualifications within a period of five years, for both Black and White races in different learning areas. The results presented by the White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013), state that only under 30% of students who enrol for programmes are able to complete their qualifications. The Green paper for Post School Education (2012), pins the cause of the low completion rates on poverty. The paper recommends a programme qualification mix that will suffice to benefit the poor as they compete to complete their studies.

The previous chapter was an introduction that gave an overview of the background of the study. Chapter 2 forms the basis from which the researcher had a theoretical basis for comparing the results obtained from personal interviews with the participants. The chapter reflects on the factors that contribute to the low completion rates of NC V students at a TVET College in the North- West province.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature, where researchers present different views. It also presents views from various sources such as reports, curriculum documents, government publications, curriculum policies, journals and articles. Literature was used with the intention of bridging the gap identified in the body of existing literature and to present guidelines to identify problems and create a more distinct understanding of the factors contributing to the low completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West province. This literature review begins with the study's theoretical framework.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher chose to employ the Systems Theory in this study because it is more related to adult and professional education, strategic human resource development and organisational development. Pickel (2007) defines a system as an object whose parts are held together by bonds of some form; they can be material, mixed or non- material. Systems are the fundamental entities of the natural or social world. Some systems are classified in a hierarchical form and some are not classified as they overlap. Time and space are crucial in the operation of systems. O' Leary (2011) explains the Systems Theory as encompassing the relationships that make up all systems. Boslaugh (2012) defines Systems Theory as a way of looking at things as parts instead as a collection of isolated phenomena. A system can always be broken down into individual parts that can be analysed and put back together again.

The Systems Theory can be applied in a lot of concepts, including human relationships. Systems theory enables one to look at any system with a holistic approach. Another theory that is relevant to the study that the researcher explored is the Social Learning Theory. Strange and Banning (2015) say that learning is a social activity that makes it a communicative activity. Social interaction plays a vital, dominant role in learning. Social learning encourages interaction, which can be done through the use of social media to foster informal learning. Luhman and Cunliffe (2013), state that Systems Theory is how organisational activities follow a process of taking inputs from the setting within which it is operating, change those inputs using the organisation's structure, norms and standards in order to create an accomplishment for the organisation.

The researcher, during the interviews, used probing to get more information on how students relate to each other, the lecturers and management, and how these relations enhance and

improve the completion rates. The researcher also investigated the systems at a TVET College in the North-West Province, to see how they contributed to the low completion rates and recommend how the systems can be improved in order to enhance the completion rates.

2.3. WHAT IS A LITERATURE REVIEW?

According to Kidd (2015, p.4), a literature review is critical in most of the research studies and maybe it is the part that many students find daunting. A part of that concern is to pay more attention to the nature of the description of the literature review. This is usually described as ‘critical literature review’ and the requirement to ‘engage with the literature’. While these are skills that can be developed with practice over time, the expressions are bewildering to many students who want specific definitions of the terms and concrete advice on how to achieve the appropriate levels of engagement and criticality. Guidance differs according to:

- The nature of the literature;
- The specific university requirements;
- The experience of the supervisor;
- The writing ability of the individual research student; and
- The general advice given by the supervisor.

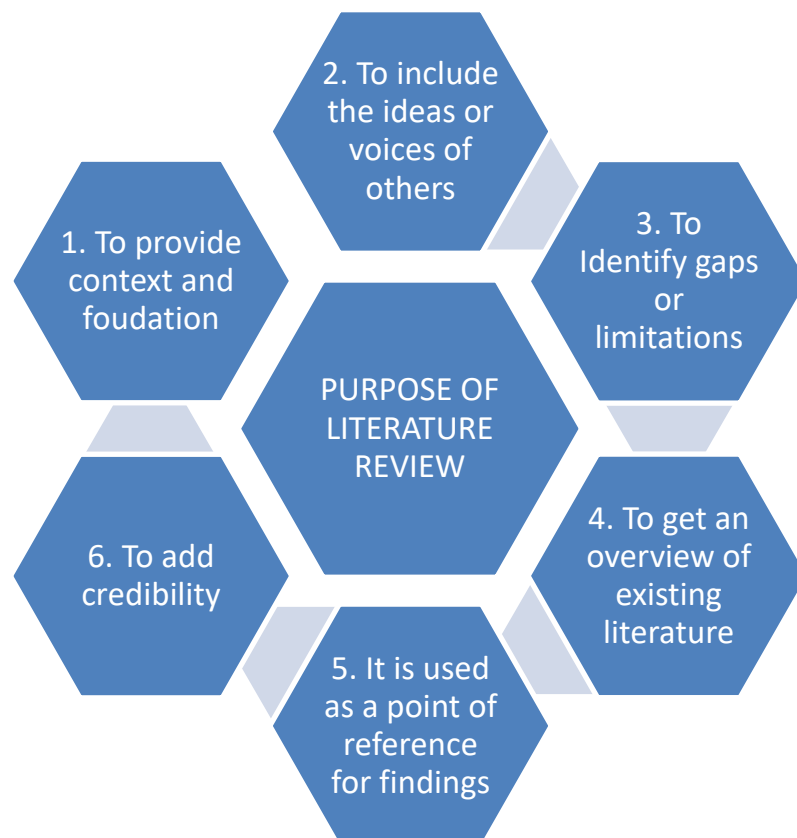
Machi and Mc Evoy (2016), define a literature review as a written document that logically argues a case founded on the existing knowledge about a topic that a researcher seeks to study. This case builds a firm foundation for research to answer a research question. Feak and Swales (2009), state that the literature review should:

- focus on recent research;
- be able to persuade the reader to read further;
- be able to reveal the gaps in the existing body of research;
- evaluate every piece of work that you discuss;
- be organised so that the reader can be able to see the major developments of the field; and
- Help one discover the frameworks that have been made use of to assist in analysing problems and help show the researcher how their work can contribute to the research process.

Fink (2019) defines literature review as a systematic and explicit method for identifying, evaluating and synthesising the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners.

Walker and Solvason (2014) suggest that a literature review should be an excellent way to engage one's reader early and motivate them to want to read one's study by arguing the importance or need for one's research. As well as how the literature that is chosen relates to the literature sources, how it informed the practices and how it relates to the research that is being written.

Reasons for doing a literature review:



2.4. LITERATURE STUDY

2.4.1. The National Certificate Vocational Curriculum

Since the beginning of democracy in 1994, South Africa has been faced with the shortage of skilled labour, and this is caused, among other things, by the inadequacy of the outdated National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) and later referred to as the N-programmes. To address the problem, the former Department of Education (DoE) developed new programmes called the National Certificate Vocational NCV for the students of the Further Education and Training Colleges (FETs), which were renamed the Technical Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) Colleges.

The TVET programmes were implemented with the collaboration of industry and other stakeholders who were involved when the NCV programmes were developed to ensure their buy-in. Despite all these efforts, Magnus, Bird, Prinsloo and Singh (2013) are of the view that the vocationally-oriented NCV programmes offered at colleges are not useful, work-focused and flexible; as a result, some leading employers reject the products of the programmes. Returning to the global debate, Lewis (2009) contends that the failure of vocational programmes anywhere ought not to be taken as an indictment of vocationalism.

In the White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013), the former Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Dr Blade Nzimande, states that in order to meet the needs of learners of all ages and levels, there must be a central purpose of the education and training system. The education and training system should not only provide the knowledge and skills required by the economy, but also contribute to developing thinking citizens who can function effectively, creatively and ethically as part of a democratic society.

The report by UNESCO-UNEVOC (2016), adds to the aforementioned that for the curriculum to meet the quality standards set by quality assurance bodies or certifying bodies, the collaboration between the lecturers and industries is of utmost importance. The report recommends that working associations should be involved in formulating the curricula for TVET.

2.4.2. Student Support programmes

Maimane (2016) alludes to the fact that all students at TVET Colleges need to be supported academically and socially. Students need to be fully involved in the planning and implementation of the students' support programmes. In the study that Maimane (ibid) conducted at one of the TVET Colleges, students, among other things, indicated that for the student support office to support students effectively, the teaching and learning resources should be accessed with ease. The students further indicated that they value the importance of student support programmes as they are very supportive in meeting their academic needs. The students commended the college for enhancing their academic opportunities by affording them access to the library and student academic laboratories in order to do assignments or conducting research on the internet for their own development. Maimane (ibid) recommends that all students ought to be provided with academic support for their development and to improve the completion rates.

Munyaradzi and Addae (2019) explore the effectiveness of student support services in rendering psychological support to students at one of the TVET Colleges in Kwa- Zulu Natal (KZN) Province in South Africa. The findings of the study conducted at the college revealed that student counselling rendered by student support services serves to enhance student academic performance. Munyaradzi and Addae (ibid) recommend that there should be qualified personnel at every TVET institution and collaborations with key stakeholders, for example, the Department of Health and Social Services.

Career guidance, is one of the critical performance areas of the student support services. It is a critical aspect in guiding the students to register for programmes that they possess abilities in and not programmes that are interesting to them or popular programmes. Chabane (2012), argues that career guidance is a useful tool and plays an essential role in assisting prospective students in making informed decisions prior to registration.

Chabane (2012) further says that career guidance should be made available to all prospective students before registration. Career guidance suffices in empowering students to identify their strengths and weaknesses that will guide the students into a career of their choice. Popovic and Green (2012) discovered that social support in the first year, with adequate guidance in choosing the right programme or course, is very crucial. Cook and Rushton (2008) links leaving school in the first year to poor career choices which leads to a conflict

of interest which then causes the students to leave college without completing their qualifications.

Fryer (2014, p. 48) agrees that student support services have a significant role to play in ensuring that the correct target market is enrolled at TVET Colleges with thorough induction and orientation programmes. According to Fryer (2014, p. 48), the students support services are divided into three main models, and the following table explains the three student support services models, which are: *in loco parentis*, the German model and the hybrid model:

<i>In loco parentis</i> model	German model	Hybrid model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In this type of support, the staff supports students in place of parents. ○ The whole staff is responsible for the overall welfare and support of the student. ○ This model focuses on the intellectual, social, spiritual and moral development of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This model focuses on student support services being the overall responsibility of non-academic expertise, and academic staff focuses on teaching and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This model combines the <i>in loco parentis</i> model with the German model. All staff, both academic and non-academic, work together in the development of students.

In this study, the researcher used the *in loco parentis* model to determine how the students, during their stay at the college, are looked after. The researcher looked into the different programmes that are put into place in taking care of the students' needs. This included, among other things, food, clothing and transportation.

Fryer (2014, p. 48), divides the roles of Student Support Officers into three categories, which are:

- Primary role- social counselling, sport and recreation and facilitating the appointment of the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the overall overseeing of the SRC. This category takes up most of the Student Support Officers' time because counselling happens on a daily basis.
- Secondary role- Arts and culture, health and wellness and social events.
- Tertiary role- anything that is new on campus.

2.4.3. Staff problems

According to the White Paper for Post Schooling (2013), the most critical determinant for the success of a college is the quality of the education offered, which results in the success of their students. To achieve this, colleges need adequately trained, capable and professional teaching staff and consequently the success of its students. The number of lecturers should be enough to keep with the increasing student enrolments. The enlargement of the colleges should not result in over-sized classes, which compromises the quality of teaching and learning. There should be enough lecturers to cover all the programmes offered at a college.

Developed regulations on lecturer qualification may guide lecturer development to ensure that all lecturers meet the minimum professional requirement to be employed at a TVET college. This puts an important role that universities have to play in training college lecturers so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning in TVET Colleges. Comfort (2012) says that the quality of vocational education depends upon the quality of lecturers.

Spaull (2015) aligns himself with the above statement that the delivery of quality education in TVET Colleges is dependent on the competence of the teacher, competence measured in terms of theoretical knowledge, technical and pedagogical skills as well as keeping abreast with new technologies in the workplace. Hargreaves and Fullan (2013) state that teaching is a moral craft and those who do it should do it with a purpose. Lecturer development means enabling students to develop and to act on their sense of purpose. Lecturer development must sponsor the lecturers' voice, establish opportunities for them, create a community of teachers who discuss and develop their purpose together.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2013) perceive that teacher development must be paid attention to, more thoroughly because it is imperative in transforming educational institutions. Grollman (2008) mentions that there is a big difference between the teaching models, lecturer profiles and recruitment process in the TVET Colleges around the world. Teaching in vocational education has failed to be acknowledged despite its significance and its societal contributions. The TVET mission has changed over the past decades; new ways of governance were employed which required high levels of holistic knowledge and stakeholders that are adequately equipped. Grollman (ibid) suggests that the recruitment process should take into consideration the special nature of vocational education as opposed to academic education, develop policies to cultivate the professionalisation of vocational lecturers.

The White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013), states that a lot of currently employed staff at TVET Colleges have a background of industry and trade but with lack of teaching qualifications. This makes it difficult for these staff members to execute their duties with ease in the academic development and support of disadvantaged students. The White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013), further states that there are significant obstacles to effective teaching and learning in South Africa ranging from student preparedness, the medium of instruction and traditional teaching approaches by staff members. The paper recommends the following strategies in an attempt to address the above-mentioned obstacles:

- A structure to be established, which looks into the expertise of staff and improvement of qualifications for current academic staff.
- Recognition of teaching achievement, that is, reward excellent achievement which will automatically lead to the improvement of completion rates.
- Look into the funding of staff development.
- The immigration policies to be reviewed on the recruitment of academic talent and limit the pool to South African scholars and academics in an attempt to build a competent South African workforce.
- There is a need to replace the aged, White professoriate and train, recruit and retain Black, African academics.

As opposed to the White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013), the UNESCO- UNEVOC report (2018), highlights the fact that most of the lecturers in the

TVET sector do not possess industrial experience. The report emphasises industry as the primary source of information for lecturers in establishing their teaching modules. According to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2018), there is a need for TVET lecturers' professional development. The professional development should include, among others, keeping abreast with the development of new technology and industrial working methods. If the lecturers are well supported with curriculum implementation and in obtaining new qualifications, the students will also succeed.

Simon and Pleschová' (2012) state that in countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland, Belgium, and the Nordic, much attention is given to staff development and that staff development should be evaluated to determine whether training has fulfilled its purpose and afterwards come up with strategies for improvement. Brookhart, Guskey, Bowers, McMillan, Smith, Smith, Stevens, and Welsh (2016) discovered that the quality of teachers is the most critical factor that influences student achievement. Brookhart et al. (ibid), state that according to the American systems, an emphasis is put on teacher quality and that the American system aims to improve professionalisation of teaching, hence standards were developed for teacher preparation programmes.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in America assists teachers to self-reflect on their practices and assess and evaluate their teaching abilities.

The NBPTS set five propositions against which teachers are able to assess and reflect on their practices:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers understand the subjects that they teach and know how to teach those subjects.
- Teachers, as classroom managers are responsible for managing the learning of students.
- Teachers should think systematically.
- Teachers are members of the learning community as life-long learners.

Blom (2016) adds that the TVET sector has a weak training base, lecturers are demotivated and demoralised by their conditions of service and lack of professionalism by college managers and restrictive funding norms. Taylor (2011) adds that to date, there has not yet been relevant and appropriate training for TVET lecturers according to the TVET curriculum. The White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013), recommends

that universities should play a vital role in the capacity building and development of TVET lecturers who are already in the sector. The research conducted by Puyate (2012) concluded that:

- Lecturers who are not qualified to teach technical subjects have a negative impact on completion rates.
- Lack of adequate instructional facilities contributed a lot in the academic performance of students hence low completion rates.
- Improper student induction had severe effects on students completion rates.
- The attitude of students and parents towards vocational education also contributed to low completion rates.

2.4.4. Social factors

Research conducted by Powell (2014) has shown evidence of a bulk of students at TVET Colleges as emanating from poverty-stricken family backgrounds and that there has been an active linking of TVET Colleges to the reproduction of inequality. Another point raised by Powell (2014), was that the TVET College students were not doing well since they were at schools and that they are not as academically strong as those who went to institutions of further learning. Powell (2014) blames this challenge on the history of colonialism and apartheid.

TVET Colleges are, therefore, linked to social and educational inferiority and mental backwardness rather than emphasising the ability of the TVET Colleges in providing individual development and preparation for a satisfying occupation. Powell (2014) states that TVET Colleges are perceived to be providing training for the lower-paid and lower-skilled workforce. There is a culture that parents regard TVET Colleges as terminal in nature with a bulk of students not able to complete their qualifications. Ismail and Hassan (2014) agree that parents and students are still not confident about the TVET Colleges. The TVET based qualifications are still not well perceived and recognised by the industry.

Spaull (2015) argues that a lot of students did not complete their qualification and raised the following reasons that were raised by students interviewed during the household research. These are lack of financing, wanting to look for a job, failing grades and pregnancy of

female students. The research suggested the following recommendations towards improving completion rates:

- A national reading campaign for students to acquire basic numeracy and literacy skills.
- Increase teacher content knowledge and teaching skills.
- Conduct a countrywide audit of curriculum advisors.
- Reduce teenage pregnancy and childbearing. This can be achieved by health care awareness campaigns and contraception.

Badat (2010) states that there is a need for the qualifications and programmes to be restructured and aligned to the industry needs. Spaul (2015) suggests that the quality of education offered to the poor ultimately becomes a poverty trap, which is blamed on poor children in South Africa starting off behind and remaining behind. According to Spaul (2015: 2), Black children in rural areas are the most disadvantaged.

Phasha, Mahlo and Dei (2017), state that research has shown that the majority of South African teachers do not possess basic content knowledge and the methodological skills to teach the subjects that they are teaching. Spaul (2015) further states that the education system can only go as far as the competencies and quality of its teachers. Spaul (ibid) recommends alternative teacher training techniques, especially in areas where there are significant deficiencies and that teacher training opportunities should be identified. Popovic and Green (2012) mention that when students do not have friends or connections with others, being it fellow students or lecturers, they tend to isolate themselves.

Research conducted by Spaul (2015) states that it is essential to improve the quality of education provided to the institutions in rural areas. Spaul (ibid) revealed that the wealthiest two provinces in the country, Western Cape and Gauteng, perform better academically. Again, students from urban areas are better fluent in English than students from rural areas and those students from urban areas, who have used a computer before perform better than students from rural areas who have never used a computer before. Ani (2017) adds that students who have never been exposed to the English language tend to suffer psychologically. According to Ani (2017) and Spaul (2015), Black children in rural areas are the most disadvantaged. These authors suggest that the provision of textbooks in vernacular is of utmost importance.

Spaull (2015) recommends that when reviewing education policies, the following aspects should be taken into consideration: access to reading textbooks, additional assessments, quality management and sharing best practice with neighbouring countries.

Basch (2011) states that it does not matter how well the teachers are prepared, what measures they put in place and what management structures are in place, learning will take place only if the students are motivated and are able. Basch (ibid) lists seven educational disparities that have an effect on student achievement, which are vision, asthma, teen pregnancy, aggression and violence, physical inactivity, breakfast, inattention and hyperactivity. The results of the research conducted by Basch (ibid), show that these health disparities have an effect on the students' ability to learn and present approaches that can be put in place to address these problems.

2.4.5. Drugs, substance abuse and violence

“I went with the wrong crowds”, this was a statement uttered by one of the participants during the study conducted by Powell (2014). Another female student pursued to enrol at a TVET College after talking to college staff members thinking that the college will give her the required practical expertise for her to find a job on completion of the training. It was after enrolment that she could not find the right people to hang out with, so she hung out with the wrong crowd and found herself influenced by it. However, she stipulated that the college is situated in an area that is severely affected by drugs and gangsterism. She explained that the use of drugs became a significant contributing factor in her not completing her qualification.

Research conducted by Diggs (2013) states that the Dayton Early College Academy (DECA) has suffered drug and substance abuse. Diggs (ibid) argues that the completion rate might be affected by the following reasons:

- Looking after children in the family.
- Absence of fathers has a great deal of effect on the children, especially the boy-child.
- Violence in the family or community.
- Pregnancies, some girls deliberately fall pregnant to hang on to the father of the child.

The report of the research conducted by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) (2007), at 50 public TVET Colleges countrywide, revealed that 5% of the respondents in all colleges stated that there are severe crimes at TVET Colleges, ranging from rape to murders and assaults. About 17% of students and 21% of staff agree that there is a person assaulted at their campus regularly and that one out of 10 respondents mentioned that some staff and some students carry weapons to college.

2.4.6. Financing and management structures

Balkrishen and Mestry (2016) mention that high achieving institutions are successful because their leaders communicate their expectations of high performance to their students and staff. Balkrishen and Mestry (ibid) further argue that the TVET College campus managers need to create high-performance expectations for both staff and students and support initiatives to achieve these expectations.

According to Mtwesi (2017), the issue of enrolment numbers, infrastructure, governance and accountability and lecturer qualifications should also be looked into. Mtwesi (2017) says that these low completion rates can be attributed to pressure on resources, unqualified educators that are not adequately trained and do not have a good grasp of the curriculum. Mtwesi (ibid) further agrees that lack of accountability from accounting officers, poor governance, underfunding and poor infrastructure might be a contributing factor to the low completion rates of students at TVET Colleges.

The research conducted by Badenhorst and Radile (2018, p. 10), says from the responses of the campus managers that were interviewed, the job descriptions made provision for the sharing of responsibilities. Some of the principals indicated that there is a need for the implementation of the instructional leadership approach to improve cohesion. According to Badenhorst and Radile (2018, p. 10), many staff members are still uninvolved and that they should start with quality management which is more important than staff appraisal.

Mtwesi (2017) argues that TVET Colleges are overstretched, they cannot be enlarged without proper resources and proper educational and administrative staff. In addition, increasing enrolment rapidly without attending to resources, human capital and relevance is a set up for failure.

Balkrishen and Mestry (2016) list the roles of an effective campus manager and further denotes that if all these roles are efficiently carried out, the success rate of TVET Colleges might improve. Balkrishen and Mestry (ibid) state that campus managers at TVET Colleges should be as effective as the principals in schools and that they should perform the following functions:

- build teamwork.
- build an organisational culture.
- make and communicate decisions.
- enforce continuous improvement.
- take risks.
- be creative and innovative.
- communicate the vision and mission of the institution.
- manage instructional programmes.
- set direction.
- develop people.

2.4.7. Inadequate teaching and learning facilities

Papier (2017) says that the lack of teaching and learning facilities results in the inefficiency of the teaching processes. TVET Colleges require the provision of teaching and learning resources to function optimally, which is not the case, according to Papier (2017). Odoom, Opoku and Ayipah (2016), agree with Papier (2017), that TVET Colleges are far behind with the advancement of teaching and learning resources and there is a lack of involvement of industry in TVET Colleges in ensuring the alignment of the curriculum in making it responsive to industry needs.

The Green Paper for Post- School Education and Training (2012), states that one of the Colleges' weaknesses were attributed to the lack of subject expertise of TVET lecturers, lack of understanding of workplace environments and requirements by TVET lecturers and lack of pedagogic skills appropriate to vocational education.

2.4.8. Student funding

Matsolo, Ningpuanyeh and Susuman (2018), state that 35% of students are not able to complete their qualifications due to financial difficulties. Most students from low-income households are most likely not to complete as bursaries do not cover all the costs.

The recent review of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) (2018) guidelines, revealed the administrative hurdles in implementing the scheme. The NSFAS guideline (2018), has pointed out the shortcomings of the current financial aid system. Only 19% of NSFAS supported students have graduated and of the 67 per cent of NSFAS students who are no longer studying, 72 per cent have not completed their studies. This suggests that there is a need to re-examine the specific reasons why this large percentage of students were not able to complete their qualifications. Maybe, again, NSFAS can look into an effective tool in increasing the funding of low- income students in trying to raise the number of graduates.

However, we see quite a quantum leap of improvement in the revised guideline. NSFAS (2019), shows the financial eligibility threshold of the combined gross family income has now been increased from R122 000-00 to R350 000-00. This means that students who were previously excluded can now qualify for financial aid, which might yield positive results in the attempt to increase completion rates.

2.4.9. Work-Based Experience (WBE)

According to the Human Science and Research Council (HSRC) (2007), the word vocational means “preparing for work”, which makes employment the ultimate aim of vocational training. The TVET programmes, therefore, have to be linked to the labour market. In this way, the socio-economic relevance of TVET Colleges can be enhanced. Assuring the employability of trainees begins with effective guidance and counselling of potential trainees in the choice of training programmes in relation to their aptitude and academic background. Employability presupposes the acquisition of employable skills that are related to the demands of the labour market.

Papier (2017) agrees with HSRC (2007), that the TVET Colleges cannot divorce themselves from the labour industry. The industry should be brought on board, by means of partnerships

or linkages, to ensure that the industry informs the curriculum that the TVET Colleges are rolling out. This might assist in improving TVET Colleges' completion rates and easy absorption of their students into the labour market.

The report conducted by UNESCO (2012), agrees that a partnership between the lecturers and industries will ensure that the TVET curricula and teaching strategies are up to date and relevant with the curricula. The participants involved in this study also believe that the close relationship between the lecturers and industry will bring improvement in the quality and relevance of TVET, and thus improve completion rates. One participant alluded to industry linkages as the backbone of TVET lecturer education.

The UNESCO Report (2012), further states that these linkages will give the companies a leeway in choosing their prospective workers once they have completed their TVET education. This makes it a win-win situation for both TVET Colleges and the companies they have partnerships with. The White Paper (2013) concurs that partnerships between educational institutions and employers are essential as most students in the TVET sector are preparing for work in the labour market and practical experience is a valuable part of the students training. Again, students who do not find employment in the formal market can make use of the skills they have acquired to earn a living.

The White Paper (2013), says that the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) should have a role to play in forging relationships between colleges and employers, by using their resources to incentivise employers who take on students for practical learning opportunities. This may be facilitated by the SETA offices that are established in each TVET college. The colleges are advised to make use of the opportunities the SETAs offer and initiate joint projects. The Annual Performance Plan states that there is a need to urgently attend to the college curriculum as it is currently not responsive to the needs of the industry.

2.4.10. Policy issues

Aggarwal and Gasskov (2013) define a policy as objectives or principles that are set to guide the implementation and resource utilisation decisions. The national regulations can be used to support policies. The policies are more generic and inform what is to be done.

The Revised Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan (2018), states policy issues are essential for the successful implementation of the set strategies. These include the need for each country to conduct an initial assessment of its national TVET system capacity, the linking of the TVET College strategy with national policies and strategies, linking with international policies, lining with the world of work, professional development of TVET staff, provision of funding and equipping of TVET Colleges and female participation in the TVET.

Policy borrowing is not unusual and is an important element of the literature on qualifications frameworks. Spreen (2001) argues that countries have in recent decades been borrowing and sharing policies from each other to support the set objectives or programmes of their interest. Edwards (2004) points out that the development of an education policy is dependent on the following common themes:

- When change is imminent, for example, when education and training systems seem to be failing.
- There is an increased emphasis on standards and accountability.
- When the current policy is a hindrance to improving the quantity and quality of education graduates.

The White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013), sets out the objective to improve the capacity of post-school education to meet the needs and the demands of the country which it aims to achieve through the formulation of policy objectives that are:

- Education and social justice: this will serve to rid the country of its injustices of the apartheid past. Education has proven to be providing a route out of poverty.
- A single, coordinated system: to ensure that there is easy articulation between different parts of the system, for example, ensuring that the curricula are built to allow articulation between the levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), an example of which is NQF L4 qualification granting access to a university diploma or degree. This kind of system will allow the vertical and horizontal movements of students between various streams and levels.

Mc Grath (2011) agrees with policy borrowing but not to the extent that the African Vocational Education and Training (VET) system does it. Processes of policy borrowing and

lending are complex and African VET systems are too reliant on international standards and models. This results in defeating the purpose for attempts by the African countries in developing their own sustainable approaches. It is clear the African VET systems will lead to an inflow of international influences. Mc Grath (ibid) recommends that the international evidence of VET systems should be reviewed and says this can be done through study visits and exchanges.

Mc Grath (2011) perceives that the institutional reforms resulted in staff being demoralised, demotivated, giving much power to employers, and it is undermining the relationship between colleges and the communities they serve. These systems focus a lot on the need to get students into the world of work and less on the employability of these students.

2.4.11. The use of ICT in the classroom

Becker, Cummins, Davis, Freeman, Giesinger, and Ananthanarayanan (2017) suggest that preparing students for the future is the core missions of every institution of higher learning. Digital literacy is not just about ensuring that students can use the latest technologies, but also developing skills to select the right tools for a particular context to deepen their learning outcomes and engage in creative problem-solving initiatives. In group discussions with Grade 12 learners in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, it became clear that TVET Colleges were viewed as low status, an easy alternative to finishing secondary school. A history of neglect of technical or vocational education and perceptions that such colleges are for those who are academically challenged are likely to have contributed to this reputation, as well as the low status and poor working conditions associated with menial and artisanal work in South Africa. Many institutions want applications to be submitted online which poses a challenge for those students who do not have access to the internet at home or who cannot afford internet access.

The report recommended that student support systems should have academic support programmes and resource centres that students can access after- hours to help students who do not have computers and facilities at home. The study conducted by Ngubane- Mokiwa and Khoza (2016), at TVET Colleges in the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) concluded that TVET Colleges are adequately equipped with technology facilities; there are enough computer laboratories which only need to be loaded with assistive software. There are also simulation

rooms that are fully adequately resourced and work well. Lecturers who were interviewed agreed that they do have computer laboratories but lack software resources to use in teaching the students.

2.4.12. Lecturer- student relations

Bernstein- Yamashiro and Noam (2013) conducted research and found that students described how some teachers were able to reach out to them personally and how the relationships they had with their teachers helped them cope with many challenges, especially emotional ones that they face as the youth.

Bernstein- Yamashiro and Noam (2013) state that teachers that were interviewed indicated that close relationships with students contributed to a more effective classroom. However, some teachers differed with the opinion of close relationships with students as they felt they do not possess adequate training to deal with some problems that emerge, for example, social problems. Much of the research conducted by Bernstein- Yamashiro and Noam (ibid) revealed that relationships between teachers and students could make a massive success in students' success.

Beck and Pace (2017), give a scenario of a classroom that is filled with students who are eager to learn and succeed. However, the way the lecturer teaches makes the students not to feel connected and struggle to make sense of the content that the lecturer is teaching them. In the end, the students withdraw; they lose interest in the lesson and direct their energies elsewhere. In this instance, time and resources do not yield good results. According to Beck and Pace (2017), the “ how to” and not the “what” that must be transmitted in college classrooms imposes new responsibilities on the college lecturer and that what is required is an approach that will give the lecturers techniques on how to bring their teaching in line with the learning needs of their students. Lecturers must know what students need to be able to complete their studies, and they must have ways to overcome emotional obstacles to learning.

Beck and Pace (2017) recommend the following steps to assist the lecturers in ensuring that learning, during teaching, takes place:

- Identify the obstacle that is blocking learning from taking place.
- Define the mental operations needed to get past these obstacles.

- Give students practice and feedback- students learn best when they put facts into practice rather than just memorising them.
- Motivate the students.
- Deal with potential emotional blocks.

Ripp (2016) concurs with Beck and Pace (2017), that the classroom should not only be about teaching but that students' voice should be given an essential role in the classroom. Gone are the days when students sat quietly and listened as the lecturer did all the talking. Ripp (2016) also agrees with Bernstein- Yamashiro and Noam (2013), that there should be a relationship between lecturers and students and urge lecturers to start reflecting on their classroom practices and that trusting themselves and their students and sharing the power of the classroom together can yield excellent results. According to Ripp (2016), the lecturers have the power to change the education from within, change the way students think about coming to college and emphasise the importance of induction prior to commencement of classes.

Maloy and La Roche (2014) put an emphasis on democratic teaching. Engagement of all members of a classroom is key to democratic teaching. Lecturers and students learn together cooperatively. Everyone has a role to play in the learning process; everyone is given a chance to express their views, respect and acknowledge the right of others, their cultures, backgrounds and values.

Democratic teaching does not only take into cognisance the student opinions but the opinions of teachers as well. Democratic teaching simply means allowing students to have access to some power in the classroom. According to Popovic and Green (2012), students who are not able to form relationships, either with their lecturers or fellow students, tend to isolate themselves and might not complete the qualification and leave due to a lack of connectedness.

2.4.13. Learning hindrances

Ainscoigh et al. (2017), say that there are obstacles in life that can be classified as major, such as a death in the family, daily problems and divorce. These are labelled as the daily stressors that we, as people, experience. These can be harmful to one's mental health and overall wellbeing.

The daily obstacles include meeting academic deadlines, managing time, and balancing academic workloads. If these obstacles are not adequately attended to and addressed, they can result in disengagement with the learning process and lead to a lack of morale or motivation among the students. Ainscough, Stewart, Colthorpe and Zimbardi (2018) recommend that students who experience these obstacles should use the coping techniques according to the self-regulated learning framework.

Zimmerman and Schunk (2012), define self-regulation as the process in which students regulate their own cognitions and behaviours that will lead to the acquisition of learning goals. Cleary (2015) explains it as the method used by individuals to reach goals. A self-directed action has been identified as the most crucial enabler in student achievement.

The report of the research conducted by Ainscough et al. (2018) discovered that the learning hindrances are classified into five clusters:

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
Non-academic hindrances Students have control over their attitudes and behaviours	Motivational factors- Procrastination, postponing the work to be done at a certain time for later time to accommodate other activities	Academic commitments - the complexity of the subject content, for example, a large bulk of work allocated to be completed in a short space of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of concentration- lectures that are allocated long periods and those that come in the afternoon ○ Tiredness- this results in students missing some parts of what the lecturer is saying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Difficulty understanding content- student, struggling to understand concepts ○ Course material- this is when not all that the lecturer is saying is on the printouts, Ainscough et al. (2017), recommends

				that lectures should be recorded so that students can always refer back to what they have missed
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The researcher probed more on the academic and non-academic factors that might be contributing to the low completion rates. The researcher drafted interviewing questions in such a way that they investigated what the factors contributing to low completion rates are and recommendations on how they can be addressed.

2.5. CONCLUSION

The low completion rate at TVET Colleges is affecting the future of the students. The low completion rates might affect the integrity and credibility of TVET Colleges. Completion rates are indicators that are used to assess the success of educational institutions. Low completion rates can be perceived as a failure of the institution. A lot of authors recommend that staff development should be looked into, including capacitating the management staff.

The government puts in a lot of money in TVET Colleges in an attempt to equip the young people with the necessary skills and competencies required for the workplace. Parental involvement and guidance are also recommended by most studies. Parental guidance assists in motivating the students to study. The issue of student support programmes should be looked into; hence some authors recommend monitored student support programmes.

Most authors agree that the issue of low completion rates should be managed from all levels. They give different views on how the completion rates at TVET Colleges can be managed. The literature review of the existing body of literature on the factors that contribute to the low completion rates at TVET Colleges was discussed in this chapter. The following chapter focused on this study's research methodology and design.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore and investigate how the completion rates of NCV students in TVET Colleges in the North-West Province can be improved. The study sought to answer the following questions:

Main Research Question:

How can the completion rates of NCV students at a TVET College in the North-West Province be improved?

Sub-questions:

- What is the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College?
- What are the current completion rates at the TVET College?
- What are the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NCV students at TVET Colleges in the North-West Province?

This chapter explored the research methodology, the research design and approach, sampling and sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection procedure, data collection and ethical clearance issues.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

3.2.1 Paradigm

Creswell (2016) explains a paradigm as a way of looking at or viewing something or a set of beliefs that guide action. The researcher in this study chose to use the interpretivist approach that uses more semi-structured research questions. The more semi-structured the questions, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what the participants say or do in their life setting. The researcher made the interpretation of the data, and the interpretation was shaped by the participants' own experiences and background to make sense of meanings others have about the world. Creswell (ibid) states that the interpretivist approach uses a small number

of participants and focuses on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the cultural settings of the participants. This is the reason why qualitative research is often called interpretive research.

With the interpretivist approach, the participants were able to provide data from the context of the world that they live in. The researcher used the interpretivist approach to probe, to understand the views of the participants and to derive the meaning the participants have about their world.

Gümbayi and Sorm (2018), claim that the interpretivist approach states that to understand the world, one needs to understand the nature of the social world. The interpretivist theorists see the world as a dawning social process, formed by involved individuals and the human world as united and integrated. To determine the social reality, human consciousness should be thoroughly examined. Gümbayi and Sorm (ibid) suggest that the interpretive paradigm is the most popular in qualitative research.

The interpretive paradigm assisted the researcher in interpreting the values, belief systems of individuals, and understanding the context of the world in which the participants live. The interpretive paradigm helped the researcher to understand the experiences of individuals and their practices.

According to Kothari (2004 p. 5), qualitative research assesses attitudes, opinions and underlying behaviour. Qualitative research investigates why people do certain things. The qualitative approach is apparently relevant to this research as it allows the participants to reflect their perceptions and perspectives on factors contributing to the low completion rates of NC (V) students at a TVET College in the North-West Province.

3.2.2. Research design

Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) define a research design as a pattern that guides the research process by indicating how the study flowed from the research questions to the outcomes. It is a plan that is used to collect and analyse data with the aim of enhancing the understanding of the given topic. Zikmund (2003) suggest that a research design is a master plan that outlines the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information. Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) add that after the researcher has identified a topic, choosing

the most appropriate design is the essential decision a researcher can make. A qualitative research design was used since qualitative research focuses on individuals' social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. The researcher chose to use the qualitative research design to gain the understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations of participants and explore their views and ideas regarding the factors contributing to the low completion rates of NC (V) students at a TVET College in the North-West Province.

Creswell (2016) recognises that the fundamental feature of qualitative research is to develop understanding. It is required that people approach research from a perspective that may be different than what they have previously learnt. The researcher paid much focus on acquiring the understanding the participants hold with regards to the issue at hand and not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research or that which is expressed in literature.

For students' focus group interviews, the researcher recommended a venue that made the students to feel safe and comfortable with the time that was agreed upon by all parties. Signage was put on the door to indicate that there was an interview in progress. Communication skills such as a verbal response, paraphrasing, reflecting, questions, clarifying, interpreting, confronting, informing, summarising, and processing the relations were used.

Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the Heads of Departments (HoDs) in the comfort of their offices. One-on-one interviews were also conducted with lecturers. The researcher secured appointments with lecturers according to their schedules. The researcher used sub-questions to probe. This was done in the form of a conversation and participants were allowed to express themselves freely.

The HoDs and lecturers were interviewed in their natural setting, where they felt comfortable and during the time that they and the researcher agreed upon. The researcher made use of one-on-one, face-to-face interviews according to the schedule agreed upon by all parties.

3.3. POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

3.3.1. Purposive sampling

Dudovskiy (2018) defines purposive sampling as a sampling strategy in which the researcher depends upon his or her judgement when choosing members of the population to participate in the study and that it is the most cost-effective and time-effective sampling method.

Purposive sampling was used to choose NC (V) students to participate in the study. According to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016, p. 3), purposive sampling is choosing a participant deliberately because of the qualities that the participant has. Tongco (2007) claims that purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling that can be used when one needs to study the culture of specific individuals and has proven to be the most effective. Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigam (2013) add that in purposive sampling, the participants are selected on the basis of the researcher's convenience.

The population of the study consisted of a total number of 729 students, with 482 in L2, 237 in L3, 180 in L4, 12 HoDs and 65 lecturers. The researcher employed purposive sampling to choose 12 NCV students from L3 and L4, 2 Heads of Departments (HoDs) and 65 lecturers; all from a TVET College campus in the North-West Province. Data were collected from 12 purposely selected participants who are registered for the National Certificate (Vocational), six from NQF Level 3 and six from Level 4. The purpose of this selection was because the participants have had the experience of being students at a TVET College and were able to provide insight into the research. Two HoDs as programme managers and two lecturers were selected as they have a direct link or contact with students and were able to provide adequate information into the research.

3.4. INSTRUMENTATION

3.4.1. Semi-structured interviews

Kobus (2007) suggests that the semi-structured questions are conducted in the form of a conversation with the intention that the researcher explores the participants' perceptions, ideas, beliefs and attitudes about specific events or phenomena.

The researcher's role was primarily that of an interviewer. The researcher took field notes to record all verbal and non-verbal responses, and the audio recorder was used to protect the interview against bias. Recording an interview is crucial because it provides a detailed analysis that is required by the qualitative research. This was done in consultation with participants so that their privacy could be protected. The sub-questions were used as interviewing questions for all participants where probing was utilised until there was data saturation.

Two HoDs, two lecturers and 12 NC (V) students, that is, six from Level 3 and six from Level 4, were selected to participate. The two HoDs were selected due to their capacity as programme managers and therefore were able to give in-depth information of the programmes that they manage. The two selected lecturers, as they deal with students in the classroom on a daily basis, were able to report on their day-to-day encounters with their students and the challenges the students face as the youth. The researcher opted to interview the six Level 3 as they have already had a year of experience at the college, the six Level 4 students as they have two years of experience at the college. All the students were able to contribute useful information from their experiences as students.

3.4.2. Focus group interviews

According to İlğaz (2019, p. 206), the function of the group interviews is to obtain in-depth data from the participants. The in-depth reflects the participants' perceptions, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and experiences about a topic. Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009), reports that focus group interviews involve group discussions. Focus group data withdraw themes from the participants' viewpoints.

Dilshad and Latif (2013) mention that the focus group interviews assist the researcher to obtain rich, qualitative data within a short space of time. Focus group interviews can be conducted within one and a half hours. The participants may understand quickly what is being done. The focus group interviews encourage interaction, can easily highlight attitudes and beliefs, might provide opportunities for immediate feedback and the researcher can take into cognisance the participants' body language.

However, there are limitations to the focus group interviews. The researcher might find it difficult to get the participants together on time. The vocal participants may be dominant and

some participants may conform to others' responses even if they do not agree. The researcher might find it difficult to find the participants with the required characteristics and the researcher's skill in managing the group might affect the success of the focus group interviews.

Two focus group interviews with six participants each was conducted with 12 students from L3 and L4. The groups comprised of six participants from L3 and six participants from L4. The first interview was conducted with three students from L3 and three from L4 and the second interview followed the same process, which was, three students from L3 and three students from L4. All interviews held with students were audio-recorded. However, field notes were also taken to back up the recordings.

3.5. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Connelly (2016) suggests that trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence in data, the interpretation of data and methods used to ensure the quality of research. Trustworthiness promotes research ethics. According to Amankwaa (2016, p. 15), the value of research is strengthened by its trustworthiness.

3.5.1 Transparency

According to Moravcsik (2014, p. 48), transparency is the cornerstone of social science. The researcher should make available the evidence or data used for scrutiny or to extend existing research. Data transparency affords readers access to the evidence or data used to support empirical research claims and allows scholars to assess research and speak to one another. In this research, data were safely kept where it can be easily accessed, however, this will be done in consultation with the researcher.

3.5.2. Dependability

Munn et al. (2014) have found that dependability can be established if the research process is logical and can be measured by whether the research methods are suitable to answer the research question, whether they are in line with the chosen methodology and whether they are traceable and clearly documented. Dependability refers to the provision of evidence such that if it were to be repeated with the same or similar participants in the same or similar

context, its findings would be similar. The researcher attained this by recording the views of the participants verbatim so that they would be able to confirm that their responses were accurately captured.

3.5.3. Credibility

According to Riege (2003, p. 75), tests to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative data are essential to determine the stability and quality of the data obtained. Munn et al. (2014) mention that credibility evaluates whether there is a fit between the author's interpretation and data and that the results of the research are believable according to the views of the participants in the research. To ensure that the research findings are credible or believable, the researcher gave every member or participant a transcript to confirm the accuracy and to ensure stability in the research. Due to the researcher's passion and personal interest on the topic, the researcher guarded against biases as well as any pre-conceived ideas by using multiple sources to enhance the credibility of the study.

3.5.4. Confirmability

Shenton (2004) argues that to achieve confirmability, the researcher must take steps to demonstrate that the findings emanate from the data and not their own tendencies. Confirmability guarantees that the findings, conclusions and recommendations are supported by the data and that there is an internal agreement between the researcher's interpretation and the actual evidence. The researcher wrote the views of participants in italics to separate them from the interpretation and to represent the voice of the participant.

3.5.5. Transferability

According to Anney (2014, p. 278), transferability refers to the extent to which the outcome of the qualitative data can be transferred to other contexts. The fact that the participants were purposefully selected ensured a smooth path for transferability of the inquiry. A detailed description of the enquiry is provided in order to maintain this study's transferability.

3.6. DATA COLLECTION

According to Hox and Boije (2005, p. 593) data collection involves collecting a large amount of data on a rather small, purposive sample, using techniques such as in-depth interviews, participants' observation and focus groups. The researcher obtained permission to conduct research from the principal of the college, the campus manager and two HoDs. A meeting was held to discuss the entire process and the researcher explained that the interviews would be semi-structured. The researcher explained further that semi-structured questions would be used whereby the participants were able to express themselves freely.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Shamoo and Resnik (2003), define data analysis as the process of systematically applying techniques to describe and illustrate, condense, recap and evaluate data. Data analysis brings order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. The researcher did data coding using the Tesch's eight steps of collecting data in Cresswell (2009). The data were not submitted in the original format, but were interpreted and presented by the researcher. Cresswell (2009) puts it that during data analysis, the researcher follows a path of analysing the data to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of the topic being studied.

According to Khandkar (2009, p. 2), Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) comprises of three parts: Noticing, Collecting and Thinking. Noticing happens as you are collecting information; you notice new things and need to think about them. This might cause the researcher to go back to old data and analyse them again.

Data analysis is the most powerful but the least understood. When data analysis is robustly done, it can highlight the complications of human behaviour and facilitate the implementation of effective programmes and interventions. According to Raskind, Shelton, Comeau, Cooper, Griffith, and Kegler (2019), data analysis strategies will flow from the framework and paradigm within which the study is established (

The constant comparative data analysis method was used. Constant comparative data analysis is a repetitive and causal process of reducing data through constant recoding. According to Fram (2013, p.3), constant comparative data analysis starts with open coding to develop categories from the first round of data reduction. Further reducing and recoding

makes room for core categories to emerge. The researcher used constant comparative data analysis to compare the finding of this research with existing findings. Constant comparative data analysis allowed the researcher to analyse data according to themes and sub- themes and categorised them while comparing.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.8.1. Permission

Permission was requested from the DHET because the study involved the HoDs, the lecturers and students. An application was also sent to the University of South Africa's Ethics Committee through the researcher's supervisor. Permission was also requested from the principal of the college as the study was conducted at the college campus involving staff and students.

3.8.2. Informed consent

According to Fouka and Mantzorou (2011, p. 4), informed consent is key when conducting research, which means that a participant knowingly and voluntarily gives his or her consent. Obtaining consent suffices to protect assaults on the participants' integrity. Sanjari et al. (2014) emphasises that participants should always be made aware of the information that has been obtained and recorded and consent to it. Consequently, the researcher gave on-going feedback to participants to ensure that there was mutual understanding and agreement of the recorded information and at the same time took into consideration the participants rights to privacy.

3.8.3. Confidentiality

Confidentiality was ensured by not using the participants' real names. Participants were named using alphabets or numbers to secure their identity. Justice was maintained by ensuring that each member was given a fair and equal chance of participating, especially when it comes to answering questions. The researcher explained to the participants that they were free to request the removal of the data given without giving any reasons.

3.8.4. Anonymity

St John, Brockington, Bunnefeld, Duffy, Homewood, Jones, Keane, Milner-Gulland, Nuno and Razafimanahaka (2016) state that the anonymity principle can be upheld by not collecting data which could be used to identify a single participant or remove data to protect a participant's privacy. According to Wiles (2012), if the principle of anonymity is adhered to, the researcher is prevented from making ethical decisions in the context of their research in a way that meets the needs of their participants.

A study conducted by Grinyer (2009) concluded that the issue of protecting the participants from harm by hiding their identity results in loss of ownership. Grinyer (ibid) feels that the researcher should allow the participants to choose from using their real names and using pseudonyms. The researcher should not decide to hide the participants' identity without verifying with them.

3.8.5. Harm to participants

According to Sanjari et al. (2014, p. 4), the established relationship between the researchers and participants in qualitative studies can raise a range of different ethical concerns. Some critical ethical concerns that should be taken into account while conducting qualitative research are, anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent. In this research, the researcher explained the study to the participants, the risks involved and that they were free to withdraw from the study if they felt the need to do so. The participants were provided with consent forms to sign.

Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) point out that it is crucial for the researcher to describe any physical harm or discomfort, invasion of privacy and any threat to the participants' reputation. The researcher should also indicate if the participants will be incentivised and how.

3.9. CONCLUSION

The researcher perceived the qualitative research approach as the best approach for this study on the factors contributing to low completion rates of NCV students at TVET Colleges. Two paradigms emerge from this chapter, the interpretivist approach in order to

understand the social world the participants live in. The interpretivist approach was employed by means of semi-structured interview questions. The second paradigm is the constant comparative approach of data analysis which helped the researcher to highlight the core categories.

The purpose of this chapter was to present and explain the study's research methodology that was employed. The researcher chose to employ the qualitative approach in order to explore the understanding the individuals have on a human or social problem in an attempt to improve the completion rates. HoDs, lectures and students were interviewed to explore their experiences, attitudes and views about the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher outlined the research design and research methodology. The researcher also discussed how data collection was conducted.

This chapter focuses on the research findings, analysis and interpretation of data that were gathered through focus group interviews and semi-structured, face-to-face interviews using semi-structured research questions.

Maxwell (2014) defines qualitative data analysis as the process of identifying, examining, and interpreting the patterns and the themes in data. According to Graue (2015), Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is the process of describing, classifying and interconnecting the facts with the concepts of the researcher. When the researcher analyses data for a phenomena, the credibility of the study ought to be ensured. Van Rensburg, Dhurup, and Surujlal (2011) contend that the advantage of interviews is that they allow the researcher and the participant to interact personally through face-to-face communication. The researcher adopted the semi-structured interviews because they are appropriate for in-depth study.

Prior to the interviews, the researcher explained to the participants everything concerning the aim of the study. All the focus groups comprised of three males and three females each. The researcher could only gain access to two male HoDs as it was mentioned that the female HoD was on sick leave and was only going to be available during the course of the final examination, which was towards the end of the year.

The researcher presented the findings using the narrations with regard to the research questions, interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings were thereafter, discussed by looking at what the existing body of literature exposes.

The following research questions were used during data collection:

4.2. MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:

How can the completion rates of NCV students in TVET Colleges in the North-West Province be improved?

4.3. SUB-QUESTIONS:

- What is the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College?
- What are the current completion rates at the TVET College?
- What are the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NCV students at TVET Colleges in the North-West Province?

The following objectives were taken into consideration in ensuring that the overall purpose of the research was achieved, which was to investigate ways in which the completion rates can be improved:

- To determine the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College.
- To explore the current completion rates at the TVET College.
- To determine the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NCV students in TVET Colleges in the North-West Province.

The above questions were used, data were recorded and transcribed and presented in the form of written words. Widodo (2014) points out that the verbal transcription of data gives the researcher an opportunity to attentively listen to the data and to pay close attention to the recorded data.

According to Widodo (2014), the following steps assist a researcher in ensuring that thorough analysis of data is done:

- Warm-up listening: this is where the researcher plays back the recorded data for recalling information. Warm-up listening familiarises the researcher with the recorded data.
- Follow-up listening: the researcher plays back the recorded data in order to recognise the main points of the data. At this stage, the researcher focuses on understanding the main points. This helps the researcher to get the global picture of the talking data.
- Close listening: the researcher pays much attention to more detailed information so that he or she can identify a connection between the research questions and the emerging findings in order to analyse the data in-depth.
- Repeated and selective listening: the researcher listens to the recorded data while transcribing. This process involves repeated listening and more focused writing and helps the researcher to scrutinise the recorded data thoroughly and in detail.

- Analytical listening: this is the stage where the researcher has transcribed all the data and focuses on analysing and interpreting the transcribed data.

The researcher categorised the written information according to themes and analysed it using coding to explain the concepts identified from the texts. These categories and themes were later used to examine the data and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others.

Research questions used for data analysis:

RESEARCH QUESTION	THEMES	CATEGORIES
What is the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College?	1. Understanding of completion rates	Heads of Departments Lecturers
What is the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College?	1. The students' expectations regarding their ability to complete their qualifications in record time.	Students
What are the current completion rates at the TVET College?	1. Causes of low completion rates 2. The results of low completion rates	Heads of Departments Lecturers Students
What are the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NCV students at TVET Colleges in the North-West Province?	1. Strategies that can be put in place to improve completion rates	Heads of Departments Lecturers Students

The researcher chose to employ the Systems Theory for this study. Zehetmeier, Andreitz, Erlacher, and Rauch (2015) suggest that with the Systems Theory, the focus is not the

individuals but rather on the social interactions, groups, organisations, the system of the society, their sub- systems, decision- making structures and their processes.

Luhman and Cunliffe (2013) maintain that Systems Theory is how organisational activities follow a process of taking inputs from the setting within which it is operating, change those inputs using the organisation's structure, norms and standards in order to create an accomplishment for the organisation.

The researcher, during the interviews, used probing to investigate how students relate to each other, the lecturers and management of the college and how these relations enhance and improve the completion rates. The researcher also investigated the systems at a TVET College to see how they contribute to the low completion rates and recommend how the systems can be improved in order to improve the completion rates. This method helped the researcher to stay focused on what was happening at the TVET College. The participants presented their perceptions and experiences on the research questions.

To uphold the confidentiality of participants, the researcher opted to use pseudonyms and not the participants' real names. The participants were named using alphabets. The alphabets were written on sticky notes and stuck on the participants where they could be easily seen in order to make communication easy for all. The first focus group members were named participant A to participant F, which were expressed as PA, PB, PC, so on. One HoD was named PX and the other HoD was named PP. The two lecturers were named PS and PM.

The purpose of this population sampling was for the researcher to get the views from the five NCV programmes that the campus roll out. For the purpose of this study, this group of participants were name participant G to participant L, which is PG- PL.

It was not easy for the researcher to get a hold of the participants at the planned time as they were writing internal examinations that were conducted according to the campus' schedule. The researcher's schedule was, therefore, amended to suit the participants' schedules. Data analysis was conducted using the constant comparative approach. With this method, newly collected data were continuously compared to existing data to determine similarities and differences about managing student completion rates at the TVET College. The researcher typed the verbatim responses of participants in italics to uphold credibility.

The findings from the interviews are presented below:

4.2. THE UNDERSTANDING OF NCV STUDENTS' COMPLETION RATES

Theme 1: What Is Your Understanding Of Completion Rates?

4.2.1. Category 1: The views of the Heads of Departments

The two HoDs interviewed responded that for a student to complete a qualification, the requirement is that they pass seven subjects from Level 2 to Level 4. According to them, a student needs to complete 21 subjects in a period of three years to be considered as having completed a qualification.

PX *“The number of students that manage to complete all the seven subjects within a three years, its seven subjects level 2, level 3 and level 4, students who manage to complete 21 subjects in three years”.*

PM *“My understanding of expected completion rates is that for the NCV programme, we need a student to have completed seven subjects at the level that they are currently at, for them to have completed level 2 they need to have completed seven subjects passed and level 3 seven subjects passed and level 4 seven subjects passed”.*

4.2.1.1 Discussion

The two HoDs showed an understanding of the completion rates. The Green Paper for Post School Education and Training (2012) supports the HoDs' responses that for a student to have completed a programme, they need to complete the three levels. The student will be awarded a NCV NQF Level 2, NCV NQF Level 3 and NCV NQF Level 4. The student can then graduate at the end of Level 4. The Level 4 certificate could give the student admission for further studies at the university for a diploma or degree.

Umalusi Directives for Certification National Certificate Vocational: Levels 2-4 (2013), also share the same understanding as the HoDs that an NCV student needs to pass all seven subjects to complete a level. A student has a record time of three years to complete level 2, level 3 and level 4 for each NCV programme. This could be achieved if a student does not repeat subjects at a particular level.

According to Mabale (2013), the implementation of NCV did not go as expected because at the beginning most students could not complete Level 2. Van Der Bijl and Lawrence (2018) agree that the NCV failed to meet the expectations because of systematic challenges.

4.2.2. Category 2: The views of the lecturers

Theme 1: What Is Your Understanding Of Completion Rates?

The two lecturers agreed with the HoDs that the completion rate is determined by the number of students that complete 21 subjects in a period of three years. One of the lecturers went further to say that for the completion rates, focus is paid on the end result which is graduation.

Both lecturers attributed the socio-economic factors as the main cause of low completion rates. One lecturer recommended that the students should not only be given money but also be trained on how to utilise money. According to him, students go on a shopping spree immediately after receiving the bursary money.

This is how PX responded:

“The understanding is the number enrolled equal to the number pass and graduate at the end of level 4, so we have level 2 which enrol more or less 120 students we can half it at level 3 to 60 students, then we can half it again to 30 students for level 4 and then we will finally determine the graduation rate at the end of the exams. My understanding is because of lots of socio-economic problems, we have, we can say the socio-economic issues can be determined and add to all the lowest figures”.

PM added that for a student to complete a qualification, they need to pass seven subjects at Level 2, seven subjects at Level 3 and seven subjects at Level 4. At the end of Level 4, the students should have passed 21 subjects to be considered for graduation in the respective programme. According to him, the NCV students’ theory component is enforced with the practical outcomes to enhance understanding.

“Completion rates are measured by the number of students who complete seven subjects at level 2, seven subjects at level 3 and seven subjects at level 4. All in all, a student needs to pass 21 subjects to be considered as having completed a

qualification. In the Engineering fields students should be passing above 50% since they are thought theory which is reinforced through practical training”

4.2.2.1. Discussion

In the study conducted by Badenhorst and Radile (2018), one student mentioned that it took him discipline and dedication to time in order for him to complete his studies. This is in line with one of the lecturers who said that the students need to be disciplined, especially when considering NSFAS money.

The lecturers share the same view that the students need to put more effort to ensure that they pass all seven subjects per level. One of the lecturers recommended that the Engineering students should be doing better because practical training enhances their theory learning.

The recent review of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) guidelines (2018), revealed the administrative hurdles in implementing the scheme. The NSFAS guideline (2018), points out the shortcomings of the current financial aid system. Only 19 per cent of NSFAS supported students have graduated and of the 67 per cent of NSFAS students who are no longer studying, 72 per cent have not completed their studies. This suggests that there is a need to re-examine the specific reasons why this large percentage of students were not able to complete their qualifications. Maybe, again, NSFAS can look into an effective tool of increasing the funding of low-income students in trying to raise the number of graduates.

Mtwesi (2017) agrees that the lack of accountability from accounting officers, poor governance, underfunding and poor infrastructure might be a contributing factor to the low completion rates of students at TVET Colleges. Matsolo, Ningpuanyeh and Susuman (2018) state that 35% of students are not able to complete their qualifications due to financial difficulties. Most students from low-income households are most likely not to complete their qualifications as bursaries do not cover all the costs.

4.2.3. Category 3: The views of the students

What Are Your Expectations Regarding Your Ability To Complete Your Studies At This College In Record Time?

Focus Group 1

Most of the students expressed that they require three years for them to complete a qualification at a TVET college. They indicated that they do possess the academic ability to complete their qualifications. However, they felt that would not be the case. Some of the students indicated that they have failed subjects at the lower levels, which means that they will need to register the subjects again for the following academic year.

When the researcher asked the students if they would complete their qualifications in record time, about 70% of them responded that their record time is threatened by a number of factors which the researcher reports on in Theme Two. The researcher had to ask the students the question several times in order to make them understand what feedback she was trying to get from them. The researcher had to emphasise the purpose of this research to the participants now and then.

Most of the students indicated that they do possess the capability to complete their qualifications in record time; however, they raised the challenges that might curb them from completing their qualifications in record time. The students claimed finances as one of their threats in completing their qualifications.

Below are the responses of these participants with regard to their abilities and expectations to complete their qualifications in record time.

PC responded that she does possess the capability to complete her studies in record time, however, she might not be able to complete due to financial difficulties, lack of lecturers and parental duties.

“Yes I am capable of completing at this TVET College because I am a hardworking student and I learn a lot but I do have some problems that can affect that these problems are finance, sometimes I cannot come to school because I don’t have transport money and hence you know, we have been struggling a lot. We have been struggling a lot. And we’ve been struggling with lecturers, we don’t have an ESCO (Electrical Systems and

Construction) lecturer because they come and go and also we don't get to finish the syllabus so. I am also a parent so I am under a lot of pressure because of parenting, I don't have time to study because I only start after eight o' clock so it would be nice if there could be extra classes".

PA shared the same view as PC and he said that the changing of lecturers causes instability in their studies. He claims that they get a new lecturer when they are already used to the teaching system of the previous lecturer. PA added that apart from the changing of the lecturers, they spend a lot of time without a lecturer.

PE also added that she is capable but has personal problems, for example, she sometimes gets sick and fails to produce evidence of her sickness because she does not go to the hospital. She further said, this might make her not to meet the required 80% attendance.

The other factor raised by PE is that she does not live with her parents and that makes her not to get sufficient support from her parents:

" I am capable of finishing my studies in TVET college but we as students we face some different issues like personal issues, we face personal issues whereby we become sick when we are at home., sometimes we are not living with our parents at the end we have to come with proof that we were sick to our lecturers whereas some of our sickness don't take us to the hospital, we do not take those sickness to the hospital but at the end we fail to bring with our proof because we can't as the students, therefore this requires us the absenteeism".

Focus Group 2

This group shared the same view as the first group that they may not be able to complete their qualifications in record time. They mentioned that some subjects are lagging behind, meaning that they failed those subjects at lower levels. Some of the factors that they highlighted are complexity of Mathematics and lack of academic support.

PJ mentioned that he would not be able to complete his studies in record time because he is at Level 4 but has Mathematics left at Level 3. This means that even if he passes the subjects at Level 4, he would need to return the following year to complete Mathematics Level 4 should he pass Mathematics at Level 3.

“I wanted to complete my course within these 3 years but instead one subject was left behind which is Mathematics level 3, it’s in level 3, while my other subjects are in level 4”.

PG suggested that lack of students’ 80% attendance is created by lack of punctuality. According to him, if one is 30 minutes late, they are already declared absent. PG claimed that lack of punctuality emanates from the fact that a lot of students live far from the college. Most of them live 80km away from the campus, which takes them about two hours to travel with public transport to the college. PG is a member of the SRC and suggested that students cannot leave their homes early because it is usually too dark especially in winter.

“The minimum requirement is 80 %, per year. If you are late about 30 minutes or an hour it’s already stating that you are absent, affecting your 80%. If I stay, let me say 80 km from the college, it’s gonna take me an hour to about 2 hours to arrive to the campus. It becomes a challenge, i have to get up, get out from the house around about 4-5 o’clock so that i can get the target. It becomes a challenge, in winter its worse because for boys and girls, if you are a girl it’s more dangerous, if you are boy it’s dangerous but it’s not more than for a girl”.

Another factor that was raised that might cause the students not to complete their qualifications in record is that the students might need to work while studying. This is caused by the financial difficulties that the students experience. PI contended that some of his peers who have to repeat subjects at lower levels become demotivated and stop attending classes regularly. According to him, they feel it is a waste of time. He added that some of students in his class found jobs and only came to class during assessments. PG stated that this is why at the end of the year, the results come out as MQ.

“I’ve seen that in my peers those who are carrying subjects some of them if you are carrying one subject they no longer attend regularly as they used to because they feel like it’s a waste of time. Because of some of them which i am in class with this year they’ve found part-time jobs, they only come to school when they are writing only. That is why sometimes at the end of the year the results become as MQ”.

The researcher asked the participant to explain what MQ is. He responded that it is the code used by DHET when the student is not resulted. This is because the student did not qualify

to write the final examinations due to lack of 80% attendance or lack of a subminimum. The subminimum is the Internal Continuous Assessments pass mark per subject. For the fundamental subjects, English and Life Orientation is 40% and for Mathematics it is 30%. The core subjects require 50% to qualify for the examination.

“MQ it means that you did not qualify, your attendance was low and that you did not qualify to write your exams”

PK agreed with PI, he said that he is afraid of getting the MQ. He highlighted that he is repeating one subject at the lower level. PK blamed her failure on the lecturers’ poor administration of assessments. According to her, she had first-hand experience where the lecturer admitted to have lost her test. PK added further that sometimes they are marked absent in class when the lecturer is on leave.

“I’m carrying one subject, new venture, intentions of those are that some of our work, like whenever we submit ICASS, tests and everything, they get lost in the college. So like we get that thing of we didn’t get your mark. You start getting amazed why they didn’t get your mark, but then when you ask yourself why, then a lecturer comes forward and says “no you know what i did a mistake, I lost your exam or i lost your test. Then at the end you now amazed that now I’m not gonna get a mark that’s according to your pending results, firstly. Secondly of all, so that we can recur this subject you have to go through the very same thing, through the very same acknowledgement. You know the things but then it becomes another thing you still don’t have the mark that is required. Your ICASS is less; your attendance is actually lower. Because these lecturers sometimes, whenever they are on leave they always mark you as absent because they are on leave and they didn’t know that you were at school”.

4.2.3.1. Discussion

The main aim of students enrolling at a TVET college is to complete their qualifications. The students thereafter aim to pursue employment, further their studies at institutions of higher learning or pursue entrepreneurship. According to the Human Science and Research Council (HSRC) (2007), the word vocational means “preparing for work”, which makes employment the ultimate aim of vocational training.

Engelbrecht, Spencer and Van Der Bijl (2019), support that the TVET programmes are vocational by nature. According to Engelbrecht, Spencer and Van Der Bijl (ibid), the TVET courses suffice to provide the students with practical training in preparation for employment. In the study that Buthelezi (2018), conducted at one of the TVET Colleges, the lecturers revealed that the standard of the NCV subjects is another contributing factor. Buthelezi (ibid) suggests that the NCV qualification needs to be revised because of its complexity. Mathematics was mentioned as one of the most challenging in the NCV subjects.

Chinn (2012) mentions that if a student is not competent in Maths this can shut down many career options. There are a number of contributing factors towards students failing Maths, ranging from the teacher's teaching style, anxiety, poor memory and the inability to understand symbols and Maths concepts. There is a requirement by the college that students who absent themselves from classes, need valid evidence why they were absent so as to be given an opportunity to write the tasks that they might have missed.

4.3. THE CURRENT COMPLETION RATES

Theme 2: What Are The Current Completion Rates At The TVET College?

4.3.1. Category 1: The views of the Heads of Departments

According to the HoDs, the completion rates at the TVET College are very poor. PX commented that the completion rates are very low and seem to have dropped from the previous year's completion rates. According to him, the college's completion rates were far from reaching the national completion rates' target.

“The current completion rates are very low, for last year it was 10%, but the previous year it was 17, 5 % but still it is far much below the national completion rates”.

PP did not give the estimated rates but he was very adamant in saying that the completion rates are quite low.

“Eh.....the current completion rates looking at the amount of students that are registered compared to the number of students at exit level which is level 4, for example, you shall have registered 120 at level 2 but for some programmes we have

less than 30 students doing level 4, which means students that shall have passed....so the current completion rates are very poor, they are quite low, I do not know the figures exactly but they are.”

PX reported that the lack of adequately trained staff has a negative bearing on the completion rates. He alluded to one of the subjects that are not performing well in his unit due to lecturers that are not appropriately trained. PX put an emphasis on the lack of the required expertise, especially artisanship and lack of methodology:

“Ai...The results are not good, the results are very bad, especially electronics, the ones that are teaching electronics because it’s a practical subject that requires skills so the lecturer have never done that, it is very difficult for him or her to give the knowledge to the students”.

All the HoDs reported that the completion rates were very low. The HoDs highlighted that some of the lecturers in their unit does not possess the relevant and required skills and methodology. One HoD further said that NSFAS plays a role in the attendance of students because of their late disbursement of bursaries hence the low completion rates.

4.3.3.1. Discussion

The study conducted by Umalusi (2014) concluded that the lecturers are not equipped to cope with the social demands of the vocational teaching. Most of the lecturers do not possess the require subject expertise. The study revealed that there is a need for professional development of the lecturers.

Bernstein- Yamashiro and Noam (2013) state that teachers who were interviewed indicated that close relationships with students contributed to more effective classrooms, however, some teachers differed with the opinion of close relationships with students as they felt they do not possess adequate training to deal with some problems that emerge; for example, social problems. Much of the research conducted by Bernstein- Yamashiro and Noam (2013) revealed that relationships between teachers and students can make a huge contribution to students’ success.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2013) perceive that teacher development must be paid attention to, more thoroughly because it is very important in transforming educational institutions. Grollman (2008) mentions that there is a big difference between the teaching models, lecturer profiles and recruitment process in the TVET Colleges around the world. Teaching in vocational education is not acknowledged despite its significance and its societal contributions.

The TVET mission has changed over the past decades, new ways of governance were employed which required high levels of holistic knowledge and stakeholders that are adequately equipped. Grollman (2008) states that the recruitment process should take into consideration the special nature of vocational education as opposed to academic education, develop policies to cultivate the professionalisation of vocational lecturers.

Blom (2016) contends that the TVET sector has a weak training base, lecturers are demotivated and demoralised by their conditions of service and lack of professionalism by college managers and restrictive funding norms. Taylor (2011) adds that to date there has not yet been relevant and appropriate training for TVET lecturers according to the TVET curriculum.

The White Paper for Post School Education and Training (2013), recommends that universities should play a vital role in the capacity building and development of TVET lecturers that are already in the sector. According to the UNESCO-UNEVOC (2018), there is a need for TVET lecturers' professional development. The professional development should include, among others, keeping abreast with the development of new technology and industrial working methods. If the lecturers are well supported with curriculum implementation and in obtaining new qualifications, the students will also succeed.

Brookhart et al. (2016) discovered that the quality of teachers is the most important factor that influences student achievement. Buthelezi (2018) argues that most of the lecturers in TVET Colleges have TVET related qualifications but do not possess the teaching qualifications. Buthelezi (ibid) further contends that the lecturers struggle to marry theory content and practical content.

4.3.2. Category 2: The views of the lecturers

Theme 2: What Are The Current Completion Rates At The TVET College?

Both lecturers suggested that the completion rates at the TVET College are very low and mentioned some of the factors that might be contributing to these rates. PS mentioned the socio-economic factor as the main contributing factor.

“The completion rate...like we say we have socio-economic challenges, because the attendance depend on all of those things, but at the moment it is not very good due to the mentioned factors, uhmm, so the current rate need attention and need some changes to attend to some challenges”.

The other lecturer, PM quantified the completion rates in the past years and pinned on the low completion rates on Mathematics. According to him, a lot of students fail Mathematics.

“The current completion rates could be between 20 percent and 30 percent in the past years. Most students are failing Maths”.

One of the lecturers suggested that the lecturers’ lack of methodology might be a contributing factor to the low completion rates. He mentioned that the students can get quality education when the lecturers are qualified in the area that they are teaching.

“Mam as we do start with quality education, what I mean by that is the students get absolute quality education by lecturers that is qualified in their positions or discipline”.

4.3.2.1. Discussion

Phasha, Mahlo and Dei (2017) state that research has shown that the majority of South African teachers do not possess basic content knowledge and the methodological skills to teach the subjects that they are teaching. According to Spaul (2015), the education system can only go as far as the competencies and quality of its teachers.

Spaul (2015) recommends that alternative teacher training techniques be identified, especially in areas where there are major deficiencies. Basch (2011) argues that it does not matter how well the teachers are prepared, what measures they put in place and what

management structures are in place, learning will take place only if the students are motivated and are able. Mc Grath (2011) perceives that the institutional reforms resulted in staff being demoralised, demotivated, giving much power to employers and it is undermining the relationship between colleges and the communities they serve. These systems focus a lot on the need to get students into the world of work and less on the employability of these students.

4.3.3. Category 3: The views of the students

Theme 2: What Are The Current Completion Rates At The TVET College?

The students suggested that the current completion rates, measured by the number of students who able to complete seven subjects at a level, are not satisfactory.

To PC, the performance at the college is not stable because a lot of students fail to pass seven subjects. She also raised a challenge with subjects that are left at the lower levels in that they clash with the class timetable.

“Uhhh...the performance for me..... The performance is a bit unstable because a lot of people get behind and they don't get to pass their seven subjects so it happens that one subject is left behind and they have to continue with the following class and the subjects, they clash”.

There was an indication that English is one of the subjects that is likely to remain behind, that is, at the lower level. PF claimed that most of the students he attended English classes with had failed English in the previous year:

“Most of the students that we attended with last year failed because of English and they remained at level 2, they have passed all subjects, they only failed English”.

PA shared the same view as PF and added that even if the English performance is low, according to him, the failing of the students is blamed on the English lecturer. PA suggests that the English lecturer does not return the scripts for remedial and remarking.

“Ma, students progress well neh, but sometimes the lecturers, like the English lecturer neh, most students fail English, even if you can check on the internet, if you check the

results of most of the students they are low because the English lecturer does not bring our scripts for remarking so that you can check how they have failed so that you know what you should do next time when you write a test. Sometimes, other lecturers, they mark and they come to class for us to do recap but the English lecturer does not do that”.

Speaking about the challenges around English, PF felt that the English used in question papers is too hard and that they should use simpler English. He added that sometimes they fail not because they do not the answer to the question but because the questions are phrased in a complicated manner.

“Eish Mama I would like to talk about the English they use in the question papers...it’s too hard Mam, I think they should use more simple English like you can know the answer of the question but don’t understand a certain word, you see Mama like...you will be lost and you end up losing that question, so they should change English and make it simple, simple English, simple plain English for us to understand”.

The students also mentioned Mathematics as one of the subjects that poses as a challenge. They say it is a difficult subject and it is claimed that not enough support is given to students who are struggling with Mathematics. PE claimed that a lot of students do not attend Mathematics because they are struggling with it. According to her, students end up de-registering Mathematics because they do not get much help with the subject. She mentioned the lecturer who helps them but is unable to reach to them all with regard to understanding of Mathematics concepts. This is what she said:

“For example, Mathematics, more students do not attend Mathematics just because they say they are struggling on it so they even think of deregistering it because they say they do not get that much help even if they require the extra classes they do get anyone to help them...yes, we have a peer academic leader who helps us but doesn’t help others especially for Mathematics and this leads to the deregistration of Mathematics”.

Another challenge stated by some of the students was the subjects that are lagging behind. Students indicated that they are allowed to proceed to the higher level and repeat the

subjects that they failed at the lower level. PC mentioned that doing two levels at the same time creates a lot of pressure for them and causes clashes in the class attendance time tables.

“Okay, sorry Ma’am, (giggles)...I say that for instance there are students who did not pass seven subjects, maybe they failed two and then yet they go to another level and when they get to that level they have to do the seven subject of that level including the ones that they failed and they clash on the timetable”.

PI agreed with PC that if students do two levels at a time, it becomes baggage to them; hence they do not attend classes regularly.

“ Mam, I’ve seen that in my peers those who are carrying subjects some of them if you are carrying one subject they no longer attend regularly as they used to because they feel like it’s a waste of time. Because of some of them which I am in class with this year they’ve found part-time jobs, they only come to school when they are writing only”.

PG raised the issue of 80 per cent minimum attendance rate that is required for them to write the examination. He stated that he lives about 80km from the college and that it takes him two hours to arrive at the campus. He claimed that he wakes up at 4 o’clock or 5 o’clock for him to meet the 80 per cent minimum attendance rate. He said that it is not safe to be in the streets at 4 o’clock in the morning because it is still dark and it is very dangerous, especially for girls.

PG serves in the Student Representative Council and could, therefore, confirm some of the matters that students at the college reported to them as the SRC.

“Minimum requirement is 80 %, per year. Whereby if you miss a class, you are late around about 30 minutes or an hour it’s already stating that you are absent, affecting your 80%. Whereby, maybe for example I stay let me say 80 km from the college it’s gonna take me an hour to about 2 hours to arrive to the campus. It becomes a challenge, I have to get up, get out from the house around about 4-5 o’clock so that I can get the target, and it becomes a challenge. In winter it’s worse because for boys and girls, if you are a girl its more dangerous, if you are boy it’s dangerous but it’s not more effectively than it can”.

One of the students, PE, pinned the reasons for the low completion rates on the management of attendance of students and assessment tasks by lecturers. According to this student, lecturers are not fair to the students as they do not give them enough time to complete the tasks that need to be submitted.

"I would like to add again sometimes we lack good performance due to the submission of assignments, sometimes we do not cover the time that we are given to submit those assignments but at the end we do those assignments but the problem is that when you submit those assignments the lecturers does not take those because they say it is late submission. Sometimes you find that they give us three days to do the assignment, while the assignment, by just looking at it requires more than three days to be done. So it's a pressure to us".

She added that during remedial, when they do corrections with the lecturer, and maybe she obtains marks higher than the one indicated on the script, the lecturer does not go back to rectify the marks on the system.

"Even though sometimes we did the remark, the marks do not change in the system. I turned to find out that I actually got higher marks than the one than the one that I was given but the marks do not change in the system. I asked the lecturer to change the marks in the system but it never happened".

PK shared the same sentiments with PE and PG on the lecturers' management of their Internal Continuous Assessments (ICASS). He added that he has one subject left at the lower level, which is a new venture creation and has experienced a challenge with his marks that the lecturer did not capture onto the system. He said that when he enquired, the lecturer told him that he had lost his marks. He further added that this might result in him repeating the subject in the following year. PK added that when the lecturers are on leave, they mark the students absent in the attendance register as if it were the students' fault and this affects their 80% attendance rate.

"Uhhh mam, according to my knowledge, uhhh you know when it comes to MQs and these kind of carrying results. It's like now that I'm carrying one subject at new venture, intentions of those are that some of our work, like whenever we submit ICASS, tests and everything, they get lost in the college. So like we get that thing of we didn't

get your mark. You start getting amazed why they didn't get your mark, but then when you ask yourself why, then a lecturer comes forward and says "no you know what I did a mistake, I lost your exam or i lost your test. Then at the end you now amazed that now I'm not gonna get a mark that's according to your pending results, firstly. Secondly of all, so that we can recur this subject you have to go through the very same thing, through the very same acknowledgement. You know the things but then it becomes another thing you still don't have the mark that is required. Your ICASS is less; your attendance is actually lower. Because these lecturers sometimes, whenever they are on leave they always mark you as absent because they are on leave and they didn't know that you were at school".

PG indicated that:

"In ECDE (Electrical Construction and Digital Electronics), if you are ten minutes late you are absent. If you are late ten minutes for that period, the whole period you are absent, that affects our attendance".

PF added that in their class, they are declared absent when they are ten minutes late. He said that the lecturer allows them to enter the classroom but still marks them absent and chases them out on other days.

"Sometimes you find the lecturer teaching, he will leave you to enter, when it is time to mark the register he marks you absent....even if you are ten minutes late, the register is marked at the end, the lecturer marks you absent when you are ten minutes late.....sometimes chases you out".

PE supported what PF said in that the lecturers do chase them out, even when they have forgotten their textbooks at home.

"Sometimes the lecturer do chase us out cause we left our textbooks behind, does it mean that if you don't have a textbook can't you take notes cause you are here to learn even without a textbook you can catch whatever is being taught in class then we go and read for ourselves".

The students claimed that the attitude of students towards lecturers and the attitude of lecturers towards students is a contributing factor to low completion rates. PA claims that lecturers do not pay much attention to the students who seek their help and sometimes undermine students.

“In addition again, I think the attitude between us students towards the lecturers and the subjects”.

The researcher asked PE to explain further and this was her response:

“Uhhh, in students and lecturer attitudes it depends how the students behave towards the lecturer and how the lecturer would respond to the student. Usually students would go to a lecturer looking for help but that lecturer doesn’t give the students help the way he/she wants it or either the lecturer can undermine the student somehow”.

PI also added on the attitude of lecturers towards the students and their lack of teaching strategies and managing diversity:

“Ma’am, the problem is that some lecturers do not understand that we have different learning methods, i might be visual learner, take for instance someone can learn just by listening to audio. So i prefer that if they could learn more about the different learning methods, then they’ll be able to accommodate all those learners. Then mam, there’s an issue whereby when you ask a question in class and you say you do not understand, some lecturers would say “no it’s fine, you’ll understand next year”. Eventually that puts stress on you that ok fine eventually I’m going to fail this then you eventually give up. NSFAS is not helpful to us because the money comes in late. I suggest that for those who are struggling, when NSFAS is not making progress, the college bursary should help those that are struggling”.

PE shared the same view as PC and he suggested that NSFAS should pay the bursary money early:

“In a point of clarity for the NSFAS paying late, sometimes we do not get any amount from them anything from them but at the end students end up giving up on coming to school because of their financial”.

PA added and said:

“Sometimes NSFAS, they send us money that is little mam, like you find that they send R1500 the they will send R1500 after four months so that R1500 is not enough for you to spend R1500 if you have to catch transport to school so that amount is too small, they must give us all of our money, then we will see what to do”.

The students also touched on insufficient computer laboratories. They claimed that the computer laboratories are not available for them to use for research because they are utilised throughout the day for lessons. PI claimed that the academic laboratories staff is not always available to assist them in the labs.

“Mam, on the issue of C6, the computer lab, I would recommend that the staff be available at all times, because I remember one time I was supposed to submit my assignment and they said there was no one to help us. I had to stand in front of the help desk and cause a commotion just to be helped because my assignment was due. Then the SRC came out and I told them my problem and they decided to open for me because I was causing a commotion. I feel that if we do not voice out our problems we are slowly dying inside and nothing is going to progress”.

PL concurred with PI with regard to the issue of inadequate computer labs and the unavailability of the staff that work in the computer labs.

“Uhhh, mam, we were also requiring that at least whenever we use the student support some computers are not mostly available. Whenever we wanna do our tasks, our assignments, they always say no you can't use C5 because C5 is being used by other students, C6 is closed because there's no one there, there's no one to look after you”. Now we have to look at each other's eyes, what are we gonna do? And you know that your paper is due today”.

There was a challenge with the drug and substance abuse raised by the students. They felt that the security at the entrance gate of the college is not capacitated and fit enough to handle drug issues. PG maintained that there are students who enter the premises with dangerous weapons and the security is not able to see that some of the students are armed.

“There are certain students even some of us get scared in the campus, because there are certain students that come with knives, guns, pangas in the campus. So we feel scared, if you report him or her when they are doing something illegal he or she maybe might kill you or might hurt you. Our students smoke and drink outside the school and don’t attend, they enjoy sitting outside the school. Our securities at the gate they don’t do anything because they not the college security they say they are were hired to guard the college”.

PH alluded that the security at the gate does not do a thorough job when they search students, and some of them get busy on their phones instead of ensuring the safety of all personnel and infrastructure:

“I would recommend that at the gate, because at the gate i don’t see the duties of the security guards at the gate. I might be dating G and when we enter at the gate he might have something that’s illegal. He gives it to me, all they do is to open the gate and you pass. So we don’t get searched so i don’t see the safety at the gate”.

PK said:

“Sometimes mam, when they want to search you can tell them that you are not in the mood to be searched you just pass by and they won’t do anything to you they just let you pass. Because sometimes, especially after our lessons, you find them sitting on their phones chatting and you open your bag for them to search then they just look at you and don’t do anything. So obviously you develop that mentality that “ok fine after school I’m going to just pass, I’m not gonna be searched”.

A few students raised concerns about the lack of human resources. They reported that there are certain groups of students that do not have lecturers and therefore are left behind with the syllabus. PC is studying Electrical Infrastructure and Construction and says that they do not have a lecturer for one subject. She added that lecturers come and go and they therefore,

therefore, do not complete the syllabus. According to PC, she has a child and has to juggle college life with parenting:

“We’ve been struggling with lecturers, we don’t have an ESCO (Electrical Systems and Construction) lecturer because they come and go and also we don’t get to finish the syllabus so. I am also a parent so I am under a lot of pressure because of parenting, I don’t have time to study because I only start after eight o’ clock so it would be nice if there could be extra classes”.

PA suggested that the changing of lecturers causes instability. He explained that they get used to the teaching system of a particular lecturer and when the lecturer is changed, they struggle to catch up because they are used to the teaching system of their former lecturer. PA maintained that they spend a lot of time without lecturers.

“Mam like, there was a lecturer that was brought to teach us but then left us. So Mam like, the change of lecturers cause instability because you won’t be able to catch up because when they change the lecturer you are used to the teaching system of the previous lecturer so when you bring another one it becomes difficult to catch up so it becomes difficult cause the system of the previous lecturer so when you bring in another one it becomes difficult to catch up. We spend a lot of time without a lecturer”.

According to PE, three groups in the Civil Engineering programme do not have a lecturer.

“There are students that are doing two levels at the same time, for instance that are those who are doing level 3 and one subject left behind at level 2 and they fail to get a lecturer, for example, Civil Engineering students, SA and CA they don’t have eh...they don’t have a Mathematics lecturer, and group CC”.

The students felt that the campus does not have a challenge with drug and substance abuse. They stated that most of the students who were taking cocaine have deregistered because they were not coping in class as cocaine makes them paranoid. According to PF, dagga is not a drug, and he claimed that it helps the students to cope with their studies. He suggested a designated dagga smoking area at the campus because they do not feel safe when they smoke dagga outside the campus:

“Weed is not a bad thing, it depends on what you smoke it for, some of us smoke for our minds to relax, so I smoke a joint to relax and concentrate because it improves concentration”.

PC added that she would be surprised to know how many students smoke it at the campus. She claims that it calms her down, especially when she wants to concentrate.

“You will be surprised that top students are smoking it. Sometimes, when I am under pressure and I have to study and concentrate, one pull is enough and it calms me down”.

PD added that students say that weed enhances their mental state:

“They say that weed enhances their mental state”.

PF supported the statement that it enhances the mental state, he says that weed helps him to focus and concentrate:

“It gives me focus, it depends on what you do with your focus, if you focus on bad things, you will do bad things but if you can take your book and read, you will concentrate”.

The researcher asked the participants where they buy dagga from. PC responded that they buy it at some store closer to the college campus:

“We buy it at canapa, closer to the college, it’s an amazing store”.

PF commented further on the difference between smoking cocaine and smoking dagga. He claimed that he has tried them all but ended up stopping cocaine because it made him too high and he did not require that much energy. He recommended smoking dagga over cocaine because cocaine is too expensive and gives too much energy:

“There are some that do cocaine but I can’t mention them, most of them dropped out, I don’t see them anymore, because this one affects your brain in such a way that you can’t focus, you just become high but for weed it’s legalised so it must be legalised at

orbit also. I know of four who have dropped out, they were a group but now they have decreased in number, in level two and level three. Cocaine is more dangerous and those that smoke cocaine are likely not to complete their studies. A bag of cocaine is R50, so some times he can spend the whole week not coming to school because he is saving, the R50s of the whole week then he comes on Friday to buy cocaine. They call it kat, its crystal like, the cat one is powder”.

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PD maintained that there is no cocaine problem at the campus because of the taxi drivers and suggests that PF smokes dagga because he is a musician.

“We don’t have a problem with cat/ kat at the campus because of the tax drivers, you can’t get it anywhere near the college, and mam he is also a musician”.

PC revealed that she also smokes dagga, just for fun and because it is cheap.

“I do smoke but for fun, weed is R7”.

PF suggested that they ought to be allowed to smoke inside the campus:

“I want to respond to smoking inside the campus because out there the police, the taxi drivers, all sorts of things that are against weed. Last time the taxi drivers found us smoking outside the campus, they did not do anything to us because they were looking for the nyaope boys, and they beat them when they find them. Imagine mam if they found us and beat us up, it could have been a case, so if we smoke inside the campus. I suggest a designated smoking area, for weed, its legal. I know, mam I have taken the cat, it gives you power, too much power for no reason, after taking it you don’t feel hungry. You can’t concentrate in class because it makes you paranoid; you are too much hyper and can’t be in the same space for long, you get bored. Students who take it might not be able to complete their studies because it creates paranoia. I was able to stop because it is too expensive”.

The way the class timetable is drawn is a contributing factor to low attendance rates according to PA. He says that a subject would be allocated to be held before break time and after break time. According to PA, they only attend the one before break and do not attend the one that comes after break:

“With other subjects, you find out that they put English before break and after break they have English again, so we don’t attend the second one that comes after break, we only attend the first one maybe if they can put subject there, so that we can push, instead of us being free and sitting outside without doing anything”.

PC agreed with PA that the subjects on the class timetable should be appropriately placed.

“Adding to what Mr A said, hum, Mam, I think the subjects should, they should scramble the subjects, we can’t have other subjects following each other, they should place different subjects accordingly so that we don’t lose interest because if do something for a long time, you start to lose concentration and interest but if we do things at shorter times and change subjects, we are okay”.

PE added to the timetabling challenge by saying that classes do not run as normal on Fridays. She claimed that classes are allocated on the timetable for Fridays but they do not happen as scheduled. According to him, lecturers only mark the attendance register and dispatch them:

“In addition of the class timetable, usually on Fridays we have classes to attend but when we come none of the lecturers want to give us any lessons, so I suggest that on Fridays we shouldn’t have any classes. Usually we do come to school on Fridays but we just sit around, don’t have any classes, even if you go to class the lecturer will be having the register and they be like, sign and go”.

4.3.3.1. Discussion

From the research findings, it emerged that the students displayed different levels of motivation, different attitudes about teaching and learning, and different responses to specific classroom environments and instructional practices. In particular, a lack of motivation was a key concern among all participants. The lecturers were in agreement that deficient levels of motivation were the main source of their frustration. A lack of motivation

indisputably leads to the unwillingness of many students to learn, their poor attendance and the lack of interest in their studies.

Arends and Kilcher (2010) contend that the lecturer should create and maintain rich learning environments that are abundant in visual, auditory and olfactory resources. These environments can be the result of both lecturers' and students' endeavours to include a variety of elements aimed at stimulating the various senses.

According to Hattie (2012), learning is premised on understanding what the students begin with, then acquiring a balance of surface and deep understanding, and finally helping them to take more control over their learning. In this regard, motivation plays a vital role. In essence, a student who is not focused and motivated can ultimately end up failing. Attitudes and perceptions about learning ought to be addressed first before teaching and learning can take place.

One of the lecturers supported that NSFAS should improve in the administration of the students' bursaries. The lecturer raised a point in saying that the students should be trained in using the bursary money because some of them go shopping with the money that is meant for their studies. One of the lecturers alluded to the development of lecturers. He suggested that the lecturers should develop themselves and not wait for the initiative from the college. The students reported that the lecturers have a challenge in classroom management and administration. There seems to be a challenge with lecturer-student relationships.

The lecturers also suggested that the NSFAS bursary be paid in time and maybe increase the amounts that they give to them. They claimed that they either get little or no money. Most of the students were concerned about the college's starting time. They claimed that half-past seven is too early for them because they live far from the college. Most of them agreed to the suggestion that classes should start at Eight O'Clock. A concern of safety in winter was raised because it is dark in the mornings, especially the safety of girls.

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Two subjects, English and Mathematics, were mentioned as the most challenging subjects for the students. According to the students, English and Mathematics are the most failed subjects and the most likely to remain at the lower level.

Ani (2017) added that students who have never been exposed to the English language tend to suffer psychologically. According to Spaul (2015), Black children in rural areas are the most disadvantaged. This author suggests that the provision of textbooks in vernacular is of utmost importance.

Boaler (2010) refers to Mathematics as the elephant in the classroom and contends that with the right parenting and teaching, students can be lead to excellent Mathematics success. Mathematics cannot be taught in the old, ancient ways with students glued to their desks but should instead be interactive. Boaler (2010) recommends that it is okay to allow students to share their thinking in the classroom, even if they are wrong.

Students pointed to textbooks as a challenge; they said they prefer tablets over textbooks because textbooks are too heavy and that they arrive in class tired from carrying textbooks. According to the students, infrastructure is a challenge. Some of the students reported that the college does not have enough computer labs for all of them. Lack of sufficient computer labs results in the students being unable to complete their assignments on time. Students are therefore not able to submit assignments on the due dates set by respective lecturers.

Puyate (2012) supports the statement of the attitude of lecturers by saying that it is crucial for lecturers to have the right attitude towards their students and their job. According to Puyate (ibid), the attitude of lecturers has a great impact on the academic performance of students. Most of the students attributed the low completion rates to the late disbursement of bursaries by NSFAS or no allocation of finances to financially deserving students. When the researcher asked about the financial support the students get from NSFAS, the students indicated that they felt that NSFAS was not helping them as much as it should and the way it should. PC felt NSFAS is not helpful to them because they pay their bursary money late. She suggested that the college should pay the students when they see that NSFAS is not making progress.

Goldstein (2016) claims that weed helps with health problems, including memory loss. Goldstein (ibid) concurs with the students that weed enhances concentration. Thompson (2018) adds that in the states that have legalised weed for medical use, it is illegal to consume it in public. Thompson (ibid) further contends that weed cannot be consumed while driving and in locations that do not allow cigarette smoking.

Solowij (2011) disagrees that weed helps with memory: instead, it leads to memory impairment. According to Solowij (2011), weed can have a negative neurocognitive effect. Prashad and Filbey (2017) concur with Solowij (2011), that weed smokers revealed a slower reaction time than the ones that smoke an ordinary cigarette. According to Jacobus and Tapert (2014), weed has a negative effect on the adolescent brain. Jacobus and Tapert (ibid) suggest that the use of weed showed evidence of disadvantages in the neurocognitive performance and altered how the brain functions.

4.4. THE STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO IMPROVE THE COMPLETION RATES

Theme 3: What Are The Key Strategies That Can Be Put In Place To Improve The Completion Rates Of NC (V) Students At TVET Colleges In The North-West Province?

4.4.1. Category 1: The views of Heads of Departments

The first Head of Department to be interviewed recommended that extra classes and the winter school may be put in place in an attempt to improve completion rates, he was named PX and this is what he said:

“There are quite a few strategies that I can recommend, the first one is winter schools, if we can have classes during their holidays, the second strategy that we can put in place is to have extra classes when students knock off at half past two in poor performing subjects”.

PX recommended that career guidance prior registration be done as a means to avoid students registering for courses that they are not interested in.

“The other strategy that we can use is to get students who know the field that they want to study on when we do registration because currently what is happening is when a programme is full, and a student is told what other programme would you want to study students would say any programme that is not full so if we can get the students that are interested to do relevant field it would be better”.

The other HoD's first recommendation was that the misconception that the schools and the communities have about the TVET Colleges should be addressed first. One HoD, PP

suggested that career guidance should be done to make the students aware of the various courses offered by the TVET College and the opportunities that these courses offer.

“Uhhh, the college can try to...I think first of all one of the challenges that we have as to the Colleges is a misunderstanding or a misconception of courses that we offer here, for example we have some mainstream or high school teachers that have confessed to say that they send their failing or non-performing students or students that are too old in...in high school they send them to complete their studies and now that is completely wrong because we also want student who will be able to pass, not failing students and students that are not performing. Now it means that from high school we already have a misconception that a TVET college should handle students with learning disabilities of a dumping ground for learners who are not coping or failing in high school. So we first need to change the kind of information we communicate to communities.....what a TVET College is so we if we change the mind- set of the community, if we market the TVET college....then we will be able to attract the kind of students that we want, to handle the kind of programmes that we offer, then we will be able to handle, that's my first opinion, if we change the image of TVET college that we attract the right students”.

Another strategy recommended was the early disbursement of bursaries. PX agreed with PP that NSFAS should improve in the early allocation of bursaries:

“The other strategy that we can put in place, not necessarily on our side is the early disbursement of bursaries because most of the students complain about transport money so if the bursary can be paid early in the year in January or February then we can reduce the number of absentees then we can improve the number of this completion rate. The other strategy that we can put in place also is if we can get appropriately qualified skilled lecturers, especially the Engineering fields eh.....it can go a long way in improving completion rates”.

PP suggested that the college needs to come up with methods of assisting students financially, using the college bursary, especially in the beginning of the year.

“We need to ensure that our eh...our method of assisting students financially which is college bursaries and NSFAS are working from the beginning of the year and students

have got funds, they have got assistance, eh...similar to what is happening now in universities, we need to have the funds available for students at the beginning of the year, that could help alleviate some of the pressures at home and ensuring that students are able to come to the college”.

PX said:

“I think the student support if they can make arrangements with the college just to pay....this bursary money for the first term and then when the bursary money is paid, students can refund money to the college”.

PX recommended that the lecturers should be developed with regard to their qualifications, especially when coming to methodology:

“The other strategy also is if we can....if our lecturers can have this methodology it can also improve the completion rates. I think if we can put these strategies in place it can improve completion rates”.

PP re-iterated what PP said that the lecturers need to upgrade their qualifications to improve their methodology skills:

“In TVET Colleges we are struggling with lecturers that are not appropriately qualified in terms of teaching qualifications, meaning that they have never been taught how to.....formally....they have never been taught formally how to mediate lessons and how to facilitate in the classroom so we need to train our lecturers either formally with also uhhh, provision of skills so that they can be able to mediate in the classroom and teach because if they are unable to manage the classroom properly, they will miss some of the students, if they don't know how to discipline the students, if they don't know how to offer interesting and lively classes or lessons they will lose the students in the classroom who are not gonna be interested to come and there's gonna be a high absentee rate and when the students are absent they miss lessons and when they miss lessons, they won't be able to.....and they won't be able to pass their studies”.

The researcher probed further in order to get an indication of what qualifications the lecturers that are currently teaching in their units possess. According to PX, only 40% of his staff is appropriately qualified. PX also recommended the strategies that the college can put in place to improve the lecturers' qualifications, and this is what he suggested:

"In my unit I got about five lecturers, out of the five the ones that I can say they are appropriately qualified is only two, the other three they are struggling, they are not yet there, they still have to do like artisanship, they have to do methodology".

"Ya, what I think is that the college must subsidies them to do their methodology studies, they can register at universities to study and then the college can give them or pay a certain amount of money, it will go a long way".

PP claimed that there are issues that are social in nature that need to be addressed. He mentioned that students have been used to walk to school and all of a sudden have to travel to college. According to him, this puts pressure on the income of the household as transport may not have been budgeted for.

"We also need to address issues that are of a social nature in that the students that live in our townships and some of our rural areas have got schools directly placed in their neighbourhood, and they can walk to school, now, the students if they...all of all of a sudden have to travel to town everyday whereas in the budget at home there was no amount that was budgeted for transport, now that student is putting pressure on the income of the household".

PP commented on the type of students that the college is attracting and that the college needs to have systems in place to deal with students who were not coping at school. He recommended a bridging course to prepare the students for the programmes that they want to register for. He added that the pass rates at schools are better than the pass rates at the TVET College. He re-iterated the bridging programme:

"Also what we can do is we need to have uhmm, measures in place to deal with the kind of students that we are attracting, because we know that we have uhmm, students that are not performing in high school coming here, we need to have systems in place to deal with such, we need to have in our academic support a department, which will, from the get go recognise that we got students that have been failing in high school

and might not be able to handle the kind of content that we offer from the onset, from level 2, we need to be assisting students to be able to pass. We need a bridging course of some sort, when we look at the kind of pass rates we have in high schools, they are quite...they are not on the standard that we have here at TVET college, for instance we have students that need to pass at 30% and 40%our NCV subjects, the core subjects need students to have 50% so we need a bridging programme so that we have students assimilated to inducted into the NCV programme. We can also look into eh....any kind of strategy from all departments, if it means giving students extra classes,.....let us do that so that we can have students passing and thereby completing their qualifications”.

4.4.1.1. Discussion

It is evident from the findings of the study that the college needs to implement strategies to improve the completion rates. One of the HoDs recommended that the college should look into the type of students that the college is attracting. Early payment of bursaries came as a recommendation from the two HoDs. The lecturers also supported that NSFAS should pay the bursaries early.

Career guidance, as part of the student support services, is a critical aspect in guiding the students to register for programmes that they possess abilities in and not programmes that are appealing to them or popular programmes. Chabane (2012) argues that career guidance is a useful tool and plays an essential role in assisting prospective students to make informed decisions prior to registration.

Chabane (2012) maintains that career guidance should be made available to all prospective students before registration. Career guidance suffices in empowering students to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This guides them into a career of their choice. Popovic and Green (2012) discovered that social support in the first year, with adequate guidance in choosing the right programme or course, is very crucial. Cook and Rushton (2008) blame leaving school in the first year on poor career choices that lead to a conflict of interest that then causes the students to leave college without completing their qualifications.

Fryer (2014) agrees that student support services have a significant role to play in ensuring that the correct target market is enrolled at TVET Colleges with thorough induction and orientation programmes. Both the HoDs recommended training of lecturers, to improve their

qualifications, their skills and methodology. From the reports of all participants, lecturers need to be capacitated. The students pointed out that the lecturers do not give them enough time to complete the tasks that they give them. They also raised a concern with the marks that the lecturers capture in the system and the actual marks that the students get in their assessments.

According to the students, some lecturers do remedial, but others do not. The students felt that they are not happy with the way lecturers manage attendance registers. Some of them say that they will be marked absent even when they were late and that affects the 80% attendance rate required by the college. The Green Paper for Post- School Education and Training (2012) states that at one of the colleges, weaknesses were attributed to the lack of subject expertise of TVET lecturers, lack of understanding of workplace environments and requirements by TVET lecturers and lack of pedagogic skills appropriate to vocational education.

According to Ismail and Hassan (2013), most of the lecturers appointed directly after college and university are assessed based on their academic capability. These lectures with academic qualifications are appointed without ensuring that they possess the relevant skills and expertise. Ismail and Hassan (ibid) contend that the qualified personnel who possess experience are not eager to become lecturers because of the unattractive salary packages. Blom (2016) adds that the current conditions of service of lecturers have a significant effect on the motivation of lecturers. The conditions of service demoralise the lecturers from improving their qualifications and upgrading their skills. Blom (ibid) maintains that the lecturers with trade qualifications or industry credentials do not have teaching qualifications.

Puyate (2012) conducted research and concluded that lecturers who are not qualified to teach have a negative impact on the completion rates. Inadequate infrastructure contributes a lot to the academic performance of students. According to Puyate (2012), improper induction of students and parents towards vocational education has a severe effect on completion rates. Powell (2014) claims that TVET Colleges are seen to be providing training for the lower-paid and lower-skilled workforce. There is a culture that parents regard TVET Colleges as terminal in nature with a bulk of students not able to complete their qualifications. Ismail and Hassan (2013) agree that parents and students are still not confident about the TVET Colleges. Becker et al. (2017) conducted research with Grade 12

learners in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban, and concluded that TVET Colleges were viewed as low status, and an easier alternative to finishing secondary school.

4.4.2. Category 2: The views of lecturers

Theme 3: What Are The Key Strategies That Can Be Put In Place To Improve The Completion Rates Of NCV Students At TVET Colleges In The North-West Province?

PS believed that if the students are not well taken of at home, they will not be able to do well at the college. He suggested that students need money to travel to college and money for food to eat at the college. He stated that students will not have good attendance rates if they do not have money to travel to the college and will not cope in class if they are hungry.

“Right, uhmm, there are many factors to take into consideration. If you talk about...what is socio-economic...if the student is not taken care of he will not fit in college, so bursaries need to be on time, to pay the classes financial, for their daily economical needs. Uhmm, they need transport.....we need to look at this as well cause without....without eh...finance, students will not have a good attendance uhmm, cause he will not have money to come to school, they will not have.....when a student is hungry it means the student cannot cope or concentrate”.

PS recommended that the bursary should be paid out to students on time:

“So those bursaries should come on time, students do not have to wait for so long time for the pay- outs”.

According to PS, the students should not only be given bursary money but they also need to be trained on how to use the money. He mentioned that some students go on a shopping spree:

“Above all we need to educate students how to utilise the bursary. Some of the students get a lot of money at once and they see it as a shopping spree money...so before we get bursaries...before the students receive that money, he must be trained or educated how to make a budget from that money and how to divide the money into each day for each month. To utilise it to the maximum, to cancel out all the socio- economical problem because to my point of view, I think bursary NSFAS is enough money to survive and to

carry them out through the year, if I is received on time and if it the student is trained and educated how to use it, then we will not have problem with transport, when do not have a problem”.

PS shared the same sentiments with PX that lecturers should improve their qualifications. However, he thought the lecturers should not make it the responsibility of the college but take the initiative to have their qualifications upgraded:

“Lecturers should improve themselves, self-improvement and not only wait for the college (replace with the college), from themselves because you cannot always accredited, you can always register as a professional body.....that is self-improvement and that body will send yourself and your discipline for training and you will upgrade yourself in private, lecturers must currently also uhmm, aspire to improve themselves as well, self- improvement or training for the sake of students and for the sake of technology that is improving all the time, so the students can also receive the quality education and that orbit (replace with the college) can maybe....training session for the specific programme that they are teaching”.

PT commented on the admission and registration of prospective students. He recommended that the students should be interviewed and registered towards the end of the preceding year of enrolment. PT believed that this would give the selection committee a chance to test and pick the best students for the career that the students choose.

“Prospective students should be interviewed and registered towards the end of the preceding year of enrolment. This will give selection process a chance to test and pick the best students suited for the different courses offered at the TVET College”.

4.4.2.1. Discussion

The lecturers raised a concern with the late disbursement of bursaries. The lecturers claimed that late payments of bursary money results in poor class attendance and students missing assessments. One of the lecturers suggested that the students cannot cope in class when they are hungry.

García, Pérez and Sanz (2019) suggest that the education system should take hunger into account. According to Askew, Mc Dowel and Sanz (2011), hunger affects cognitive and

socio-emotional development. If hunger is addressed, the academic potential of students improves. Askew, Mc Dowel and Sanz (ibid) state that it is rare that the students state that they are hungry, but the hunger symptoms show. The hungry students complain of headaches, weakness and stomach ache. There is also a decline in the students' academic performance, class attendance and the students avoid the cafeteria area.

There was a suggestion that the students might be taught how to use money responsibly. Serowik, Bellamy, Rowe and Rosen (2013) recommend that money management programmes can help to encourage students to have control over their money. A study conducted by Mavuso (2017) revealed that female students do not afford to buy sanitary towels. They resort to using the bursary money to buy food and other necessities for their families.

4.4.3. Category 3: The views of students

Theme 3: What Are The Key Strategies That Can Be Put In Place To Improve The Completion Rates Of NC (V) Students At TVET Colleges In The North-West Province?

Focus Group 1

PD recommended that Wi-Fi is needed and suggested that the college should buy them tablets instead of textbooks:

“Speaking about Wi-Fi, it will be easy for us to login with tablets and find information through internet, not textbooks mam, textbooks is too complicated for us and they don't give us much information as we want them to give us”.

PF suggested that the textbooks should be cancelled and recommended that lecturers should make use of question papers to prepare them for the final external examinations. This is what he said:

“I would like to add on the tablets and the textbooks mam, I think we should use uhmm, question papers when we study more like using textbooks cause textbooks are really complicated and question papers are simple cause it's probably what you are going to write at the end of the year so we get an idea of how we should study and how questions come in the exam question papers are fine...textbooks should be cancelled”.

PD shared the same sentiments that textbooks should be cancelled because they are hard labour. According to him, textbooks are too heavy, and by the time they get to class, they are tired and therefore cannot concentrate in class.

“I think the college should make sure that the students are financially stable because most of them can’t come to school because they don’t have money. And Madam I would like to say that textbooks should be replaced with tablets... cause Madam we cannot come to school with a bunch of textbooks...giggles...its hard labour mam you know. We won’t be able to concentrate in class to because by that time when we have to concentrate in class, we’ll be lagging some energy”.

There was a recommendation made by PE that the HoDs should ensure that the students do not experience a shortage of lecturers:

“eh...in part of lecturers, I think our HoDs should make sure each and every month they do check if students have their lecturers if they do lack or not, if they find out that there are no lecturers for the students, they have to do something about that”.

Most of the students seemed not to agree to the classes starting at 07h30. They suggested that the classes should start at 08h00 because, according to them, most of the students are not able to be punctual for the 07h30 period. They further said that it is dark in the morning and it is not safe to travel at that time. PC is the one who suggested that classes should start at eight:

“And mam, school should start at eight and not half past seven because we cannot attend the first class. Usually in winter as you know there is this trafficking and stuff. In winter it is usually dark outside, you have to wake up at six o’clock, you have to go to the bus stop at half past six, it is still dark, you will never know what will happen to you, at least if its seven o’clock we coming out of the house, half past seven you catching a taxi and eight o’ clock you will be at school, that will be better”.

PE recommended that Fridays can be made sports day or they should be allocated for practicals, this is what she said:

“Fridays can be a sports day.....or for us we can do practicals on Fridays, so Monday to Thursday can be theory time and Friday can be practical or sports day or debate, or anything that has activities”.

Focus Group 2

Theme 3: What Are The Key Strategies That Can Be Put In Place To Improve The Completion Rates Of NC (V) Students At TVET Colleges In The North-West Province?

Two of the students suggested that the classes should start at 8 o'clock instead of 07h30. This is mostly because of the distance that the students have to travel from home to college. PH suggested that classes should start at Eight O'Clock.

Uhmm, mam, I'm concerned about the classes starting at half past seven cause most of us stay really far. When we come late they make it as if it's your problem that your parents chose to stay far from the campus. I suggest that the class start at eight, cause I get here around half past eight to nine. When i go to my particular lecturer try to explain what's happening at home, my situation at home they don't understand. They say it's not their problem, they gonna mark me absent, so my 80% attendance it gets lower whereby I'm explaining what my problem and they don't help me coming to that particular situation.

PG supported the suggestion that classes should start at 8 O'Clock.

“Winter times the student says its cold they cannot attend the class for half past seven the classes should start at eight o'clock”.

On the issue of lack of computer facilities, PD recommended that the college should ensure that they have sufficient computer labs and that the labs are always open and ready for use by students. She added that the college should also provide Wi-Fi to students. According to her, Wi-Fi might minimise the need for computer labs because students can use their mobile phones to do research.

“Mam I would like to add on the question 3..uhm I think that the school should have a computer lab for researches and LO practices because now the labs that are available

they are used as classes and they are only available at 14h30 whereas most of us are going home by that time so if we have computer labs we will be able to do our researches in time because now if they say 14h30 and then we have LO, and then the whole campus has LO, and then we have to complete the assignments and then if all of us, the whole campus wants to complete their assignments, they go to available labs at 14h30 its packed there is no space, paper runs out and stuff...so I think there should be a lab that is always open for people who want to do research to avoid crowded space and not finishing the task at time due to that....and a Wi-Fi...giggles ...they should bring a Wi-Fi, (giggles), because if sometimes we don't understand something we can login and go to you- tube and search for that maybe someone will explain it in a better way than the lecturer did...its more, its broad,..like itsreally helpful”.

PL supported the notion of more computer rooms:

“We recommending that at least a few computer rooms may be open because we are struggling to use C5 and C6”.

PG suggested that the college should implement security boards that scan for weapons and drugs when students pass through the gate. He recommended that the college should hire its own security and not outsource security services. He said:

“On the suggestion, I would suggest if our college implement security boards. Security boards are certain boards when a student passes firstly he or she needs to put his or her student card, the gate opens, he or she passes through the search board. It searches if you have a drug, alcohol, substances or maybe weapons. You are not allowed to enter the gate it won't open for you until you pass through that searching board. I would suggest that our college hires their own security. Our own security under orbit TVET College, then the students will be scared and know if they smoke outside one of the securities will call the campus manager or the HoD. They will take action upon them, but if you are not doing anything our students will not attend and it will affect our 80% attendance. Because they are always sitting outside, it's a “bash” outside.

4.4.4. Discussion

4.4.4.1. Socio-economic Factors

There were socio-economic factors mentioned by the participants, including personal and family matters. Financial difficulty emanated as one of the factors that contributes to low completion rates. For students to assist the situation, they end up having to juggle attending college and working part-time together.

Research conducted by Powell (2014) revealed evidence of a bulk of students at TVET Colleges as emanating from poverty-stricken family backgrounds and that there has been a strong link of TVET Colleges to the reproduction of inequality. Another point raised by Powell (ibid) was that the TVET College students were not doing well since they were at schools and that they are not as academically strong as those who went to institutions of further learning. Powell (ibid) blames this challenge on the history of colonialism and apartheid.

There was a recommendation that the classes should start at eight o'clock instead of half-past seven and was supported by many students. The students felt that they are not able to attend at half-past seven because of transport challenges.

4.4.4.2. Drug and Substance Abuse

The study revealed evidence of drug and substance abuse. Some of the students indicated that they take dagga, some for fun and some to boost their energy and for mental vitality. According to them, dagga enhances concentration and focus. They recommended that the college should have a designated area where they can smoke dagga because they do not feel safe smoking it outside the college premises.

Muzenda (2014) shares a different view from the students and stated that drug abuse leads to low-class attendance, poor academic performance and poor engagement in class activities. Security was of great concern to students because other delinquent students are able to access the premises with dagga in their possession. According to the students, the security does not serve its purpose because they still do not feel safe even when the security is present on the premises. They suggested that the college should implement the biometric system for easy access control.

4.4.4.3. Student Support Services (SSS)

The students reported on the lack of academic support from peer academic leaders. They further suggested that the peer academic leaders should be more visible and more supportive towards them. Gallavan and Benson (2014) contend that for the SSS to yield good results, the SSS in the college should be customised to assist the lecturers and students to work together to be on the same page. Terrion and Leonard (2007) disagree that the use of peer academic leaders can improve the performance of students.

The students claimed they cannot access the academic support with ease to complete their assignments and to do research. According to Maimane (2016), students should access the learning resources with ease. Maimane (ibid) further claims that all students should be provided with academic support for their development and to improve completion rates.

The study conducted by Munyaradzi and Addae (2019) recommends that student support could provide support and counselling to enhance academic performance. Furthermore, there could be collaborations with key stakeholders, for example, the Department of Health and the Department of Education. The SSS could implement academic support programmes for English and Mathematics. There was a cry for help with Maths and English from the students.

4.4.4.4. Inadequate Teaching and Learning Facilities

There is an urgent need for computer labs to be accessible to all students. There was a recommendation from the students that Fridays should be allocated other activities other than teaching and learning. They claimed that they come to college on Fridays only for the lecturers to mark the attendance register and dismiss them.

4.4.4.5. Student Funding

The college bursary administration should be looked into. The college bursary might be of great relief to the students who did not receive the NSFAS bursary. The students who are experiencing financial difficulty while awaiting the NSFAS bursary might be assisted with the college bursary. Kraak, Paterson and Boka (2016) report that some of the colleges do not receive sufficient funding from the treasury. The reason for the delay in funding is that they still go through the provinces.

4.4.4.6. Staff Problems

Lecturer capacity building training and professional development seem eminent. A skills audit might help in identifying the gap in lecturers' capacity to teach and in managing the classroom. According to Comfort (2012), the quality of vocational education depends upon the quality of lecturers. The research conducted by Puyate (2012) concluded that:

- Lecturers that are not qualified to teach technical subjects have a negative impact on completion rates
- Lack of adequate instructional facilities contributed a lot to the academic performance of students hence low completion rates

Spaull (2015) maintains that the success of the education system is dependent on the competencies of its lecturers.

The study revealed a gap in the student- lecturer relationships that require attention. It is essential for the students to develop a sense of belonging and fitting in. The students want to feel that they are loved and cared for by the lecturers (Gallavan and Benson, 2014). According to Beck and Pace (2017), the “how to” and not the “what” that must be transmitted in college classrooms imposes new responsibilities on the college lecturer. What is required is an approach that will give the lecturers techniques on how to bring their teaching in line with the learning needs of their students. Lecturers must know what students need to be able to complete their studies and they must have ways to overcome emotional obstacles to learning.

Ripp (2016) concurs with Beck and Pace (2017) that the classroom should not only be about teaching, but the students' voice should be heard. Gone are the days when students sat quietly and listened as the lecturer did all the talking. There should be a relationship between lecturers and students and urge lecturers to start reflecting on their classroom practices and that trusting themselves and their students and sharing the power of the classroom together can yield good results. According to Ripp (2016), the lecturers have the power to change the education from within, change the way students think about coming to college and emphasise the importance of induction prior to the commencement of classes.

Maloy and La Roche (2014) emphasise democratic teaching. Engagement of all members of a classroom is key to democratic teaching. Lecturers and students learn together

cooperatively. Everyone has a role to play in the learning process; everyone is given a chance to express their views, respect and acknowledge the right of others, their cultures, backgrounds and values.

Popovic and Green (2012) explain that the classroom should take the form of democratic teaching. Democratic teaching does not only take into cognisance the student opinions but the opinions of teachers as well. Democratic teaching simply means allowing students to have access to some power in the classroom. According to Popovic and Green (ibid), students who are unable to form relationships, either with their lecturers or fellow students, tend to isolate themselves and might not complete the qualification and leave due to lack connectedness.

Basch (2011) suggests that academic progress will be limited if students are not motivated to learn because healthier students are better learners. Students recommended that the college should buy tablets for them and provide them with Wi-Fi. This may help close the gap that the college has insufficient computer labs because they can do research using their mobile phones anywhere within the range of the Wi-Fi. Ngubane- Mokiwa and Khoza (2016) support that the student support systems should have academic programmes that are accessible to students.

4.5. CONCLUSION

The methodology and research design were outlined at the beginning of this chapter. This chapter also explained how data were collected and analysed, as presented in the previous chapter. In this chapter, the researcher explained how data were collected and analysed. The findings from this study touched on most of the issues that were raised by the authors and scholars presented in Chapter 2.

This chapter looked at the participants' understanding of expected completion rates, the current completion rates and the strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates. The following and final chapter pays much focus on the summary of findings, recommendations, and conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research was to investigate the factors that contribute to the low completion rates in TVET Colleges. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

5.1.1. Main research question:

How can the completion rates of NCV students in TVET Colleges in the North-West Province be improved?

5.1.2. Sub-questions:

- What is the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College?
- What are the current completion rates at the TVET College?
- What are the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NCV students at TVET Colleges in the North-West Province?

The following objectives were considered when finding solutions to the challenges that relate to the fact that the NCV students at the TVET Colleges do not complete their qualifications.

- To determine the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College.
- To explore the current completion rates at the TVET College.
- To determine the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NCV students in TVET Colleges in the North-West Province.

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study consists of five chapters, including the summary, the literature study findings and the empirical study findings. The researcher employed the Systems Theory in order to see how the activities in the TVET College follow a process of taking inputs from the setting within which it is operating. The Systems theory was used to change those inputs using the organisation's structure, norms and standards to the accomplishment of the organisation. A qualitative research approach was used in this study. An investigation of the factors contributing to low completion rates was purposefully conducted at one of the TVET

Colleges. Two focus groups interviews were conducted with the students. Semi-structured, one-on-one, face-to-face interviews were conducted with HoDs and lecturers. Data were audio-recorded, coded, analysed and categorised into themes. Literature study findings revealed that effective management, committed and dedicated staff, student commitment and defective policy implementation help in improving completion rates. Factors contributing to low completion rates relate to inadequate teaching and learning facilities, lecturers' lack of content knowledge, little or no financial support to students, inadequate human resources, drug and substance abuse, the use of ITC in the classroom, financing and management structures, student funding, policy issues, lecturer-student relations and learning hindrances.

Policies allow students to progress to the next level before fully completing a level. This creates pressure for the students as they have to do two levels at the same time.

Chapter One provided the introduction and background of the research and discussed the challenges the college is facing. It comprises of the research aims and objectives, the reason for the study that emanates from the problem statement, the research framework, research methodology and design that were utilised in the research.

In Chapter Two, the literature review reflected on the necessity of improving the completion rates in the college. It highlighted the importance of improving the completion rates for the college to operate efficiently. Definitions by various theorists and researchers were discussed for the concepts to be easily understood. This chapter determined how effective the strategies were in improving the completion rates in the TVET College.

Chapter Three focused on the research design, methodology, and it incorporated the layout of the questionnaire, the population, instrument guide, the sampling process, data collection process and data analysis. Two methods of data collection were used, which were: focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews. The researcher discussed the research design, population, sampling, and data- collection procedure and data analysis. The researcher took into consideration the importance of trustworthiness in this study. Transparency, dependability, credibility, confirmability and transferability were referred to in this study. The ethical issues were discussed with much focus on anonymity and confidentiality.

Chapter Four consists of the presentation of findings and discussions concerning the findings of the study on completion rates. Data were analysed and interpreted with the aim

of capturing the participants' audio-recorded responses. The researcher presented the data and analysed it into categories and themes. Analysing the data into categories and themes helped to ensure that the views of the participants are well represented and present the participants' perceptions. Two types of semi-structured interviews were used, which are the one-on-one and focus group interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with two HoDs and two lecturers. Two focus group interviews, comprising of students, were conducted. The researcher was conscious of the main question and the sub-questions of the research throughout the study. The aim of this chapter is to provide and describe the findings of the study with regard to the research questions.

Chapter Five focused on the closing remarks, recommendations, the limitations of the study and the achievement of the objectives of the study and recommendations.

5.3. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

A literature preview on completion rates, the causes of low completion rates, the effect of low completion rates and the strategies to improve the completion rates was conducted.

5.4. ACHIEVEMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

5.4.1. Objective One

To determine the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College.

This objective was accomplished by the literature in Chapter One, Chapter Two and Chapter Four. Chapter Four presented the findings, analysis and discussions on how to improve the completion rates at the TVET College. It became evident that the TVET College is not doing well with regard to the completion rates. From the presented findings, it is evident that there is a need to address policy issues. It is essential that relevant structures be put in place to address the challenges that emanated from the study. All stakeholders should work together on how the completion rates at the TVET College can be improved.

From the study conducted, all the participants agreed that the completion rates at the TVET College are very low. The participants highlighted the causes of the low completion rates that need to be urgently attended to, in order to bring about the improvement of completion rates.

5.4.2. Objective Two

To explore the current completion rates at the TVET College.

In chapters one, two and four, a literature study was conducted to meet this objective. From the findings of the study, it is evident that the college policies, procedures and processes used to improve the low completion rates do not yield good results. The process failed from the beginning phase, which is the enrolment phase. The type of students that the college attracts, according to the admission requirements, was raised as one of the factors contributing to low completion rates.

Most of the participants revealed that the low completion rates have an effect on the institution and on society. The low completion rates create a burden on infrastructure and human resources. All the participants agreed on the failure of the National Students Aid Financial Scheme (NSFAS) in managing their disbursement of students' bursaries appropriately. The scheme failed to uphold the guidelines that they have set in the administration of bursaries. There is an urgent need for them to review the procedures and processes they follow in achieving their objectives.

From the students' indication, there is a need for them to be supported socially. The participants mentioned the inappropriate use of the bursary money. It was raised that students use bursary money to buy groceries at home. Levin and Rouse (2012) suggest that students should not trade their futures to address families' hardships. The college is failing on ensuring the safety of all personnel and students. Managing drug and substance abuse seems to be a challenge at the college.

5.4.3. Objective Three

To determine the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NC (V) students in TVET Colleges in the North-West Province.

This objective was reached by the recommendations from the findings and discussions of the study on the completion rates. The study paid attention to finding the strategies that may be used by management, lecturers and students to assist in improving the completion rates. The strategies may be used to inspire a team effort in improving completion rates.

5.5. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at one TVET college, so the study cannot be generalised to other TVET Colleges. There would have been more insight provided from other TVET Colleges across the country.

The researcher experienced a delay in the collection of data because it was difficult to get a hold of all the students at the same time. The students were writing internal examinations and only came to college on the days that they were scheduled to write. Students might have withheld more information towards the study for fear of being victimised. The presence of an SRC member might have caused the participants to withhold information.

The delimitations are the study's boundaries. The campus manager and the Deputy Campus Manager were also not interviewed to avoid bias. Their involvement could have curbed other participants from providing information because they could have been uncomfortable. The intention of the study was to come up with ways in which the completion rates can be improved. The Student Support Officers were excluded to avoid conflict.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

The recommendations for the study are based on the data collected during the study on the strategies to improve completion rates. The study revealed the importance of improving completion rates. Spaul (2015) further claims that the education system can only go as far as the competencies and quality of its teachers. Spaul (ibid) further recommends that alternative teacher training techniques, especially in areas where there are major deficiencies and teacher training opportunities, should be identified. Mtwesi (2017) says that these low completion rates can be attributed to pressure on resources, unqualified educators that are not adequately trained and those without a good grasp of the curriculum. Mtwesi (ibid) contends that a lack of accountability from accounting officers, poor governance, underfunding and poor infrastructure might be a contributing factor to the low completion rates of students at TVET Colleges.

According to the Green Paper for Post- School Education and Training (2012), one of the colleges' weaknesses is attributed to the lack of subject expertise of TVET lecturers, lack of understanding of workplace environments and requirements by TVET lecturers and lack of

pedagogic skills appropriate to vocational education. Papier (2017) suggests that inefficiency of the teaching and learning processes is caused by the lack of infrastructure.

The students were very vocal on the subjects that they are repeating on lower levels and doing a higher level at the same time. They indicated that this creates pressure for them and causes a clash in the class timetable. Most of the students raised absenteeism as a challenge. There is a need for the attendance policy to be looked into. The policymakers have to make sure that the data on student attendance is accurate. The biometrics system might help curb students being marked absent even when they are present. Gottfried and Hutt (2019) suggest that the method used to measure attendance should not be punitive but instead focus on encouraging improvement.

The DHET Punctuality and Attendance Policy (2013), suggests that attendance has an impact on the students' success. Students stand a better chance of completing their qualifications if they attend classes regularly. According to the DHET Punctuality and Attendance Policy (2013), late coming has a negative impact on the students' progress and the progress of the class.

According to the students, they require 80 per cent attendance for them to qualify for examinations. This policy allows for 20 per cent absenteeism. Gottfried (2019) disagrees with this policy that missing 10 per cent or more of school time is chronic. Gottfried (ibid) maintains that chronic absenteeism is detrimental to the students' outcomes because it causes students to suffer academically. Furthermore, this author claims that chronic absenteeism decreases educational engagement and social engagement. Missing school affects students' achievement negatively (ibid).

Byun, Irvin and Meece (2015) contend that students from rural areas are likely not to attend college accordingly compared to students from urban and suburban areas. The DHET Punctuality and Attendance Policy (2013), indicates that a student shall be allowed to sit for the examination for every subject that they have attained 80 per cent attendance. This includes authorised absence and sickness. According to the DHET Punctuality and Attendance Policy (2013), the colleges are required to verify attendance, provide DHET with the students' attendance statistics before the release of the examination permits. Students are not allowed to enter the examination room without producing permits.

Amoo and Swart (2018) add that in the TVET Colleges in South Africa, 80 per cent classroom attendance is required for students to qualify to write the final, summative examination. Amoo and Swart (ibid) suggest that the policy needs to be revised and re-enforced so that awareness and accountability may be adhered to.

5.6.1. Recommendations for the Department of Higher Education and Training:

- Review the policy on the promotion criteria to ease the pressure of doing different levels on students.
- Allocate a budget for the acquisition of students' tablets and Wi-Fi.
- Ensure adherence to the recruitment, selection and appointment policy to curb unethical conduct when appointing lecturers.
- Allocate a budget for the improvement of lecturer qualifications, especially content-related and methodology.
- Ensure market-related fringe benefits to attract relevant, adequately trained staff.

5.6.2. Recommendations for the Student Support Services

Matsolo, Ningpuanyeh and Susuman (2018) state that 35% of students are not able to complete their qualifications due to financial difficulties. Most students from low-income households are most likely not to complete as bursaries do not cover all the costs. The recent review of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) guidelines (2018), revealed administrative hurdles in implementing the scheme.

Maimane (2016) supports the students that the SSS should provide sufficient support to students to enhance performance. According to Maimane (2016), the student support office ought to support students effectively. The teaching and learning resources should be accessed with ease. Maimane (2016) recommends that all students should be provided with academic support for their development and for improving the completion rates. Fryer (2014) agrees that SSS has a significant role to play in ensuring that the correct target market is enrolled at TVET Colleges with thorough induction and orientation programmes.

Becker et al. (2017) recommend that student support systems should have academic support programmes and resource centres that students can access after- hours to help students who do not have computers and facilities at home. Chabane (2012) says that career guidance ought to be made available to all prospective students before registration. Career guidance

suffices in empowering students to identify their strengths and weaknesses that will guide them into a career of their choice.

According to Fryer (2014), the SSS should employ the three student support models, which are: the *in loco parentis*, the German model and the Hybrid model. In the *in loco* model, the whole staff is responsible for the overall well-being of the students. The German model separates the non-academic staff and the academic staff so that they can focus on the areas of their expertise. In the Hybrid model, both academic and non-academic staff work together for the development of the students.

The following responsibilities are recommended for SSS:

- Facilitate that qualifying students acquire NSFAS and the college bursary.
- Provide academic support to enhance academic performance.
- Monitor and control the use of peer academic leaders.
- Assist the students with career guidance in avoiding students choosing any available course.
- Facilitate drug and substance abuse awareness and support.
- Ensure that the personnel that work in the computer labs are available to open the labs and assist the students.
- Facilitate that the students who are not awarded the NSFAS bursary are assisted with the college bursary.
- Induction of students prior to the commencement of classes.
- Draw up a timetable for peer academic leaders to assist the students with challenging subjects and ensure that classes do take place.

5.6.3. Recommendations for the Management of the College

The study revealed the need for the development of lecturers and the need to fill the human resource gap. Balkrishen and Mestry (2016) suggest that one of the roles of an effective campus manager is to develop lecturers. The daily obstacles include meeting academic deadlines, managing time, and balancing academic workloads. If these obstacles are not properly attended to and addressed, they can result in disengagement with the learning process and lead to a lack of morale or motivation among the students. Ainscough et al. (2018) recommend that students who experience these obstacles should use the coping techniques according to the self-regulated learning framework.

Spaull (2015) recommends that when reviewing education policies, the following aspects should be taken into consideration: access to reading textbooks, additional assessments and quality management. Dwyer and Davidson (2013) agree with the students that paper textbooks should be replaced by e-textbooks. Dwyer and Davidson (ibid) recommend the development of e-books due to the advancement of technology. E-books can be read on different devices and in a letter that is easy to customise to the type that can be easily read. Some of these e-books come with built-in dictionaries, bookmarking tools and interactive features.

In the study conducted by Millar and Schrier (2015), it was revealed that only 25, 3 per cent of the participants aligned themselves to using e-books. The participants felt that using the e-books saves paper. However, Millar and Schrier (ibid) believe that e-books can be useful in engaging students on multiple levels. Alegría et al. (2014) add that e-books are beneficial especially in enhancing self-regulated learning. Bagdasarov, Luo and Wu (2017) support the use of e-books because they have features that contain various tools, enable various learning networks and feedback can be instant. According to Bagdasarov, Luo and Wu (ibid), e-books enforce the development of problem-solving skills.

Basch (2011) suggests that it does not matter how well the teachers are prepared, what measures they put in place and what management structures are in place, learning will take place only if the students are motivated and are able. In a study conducted by Powell (2014), a female student explained that the use of drugs became a significant contributing factor in her not completing her qualification.

The following responsibilities are recommended for the management of the college:

- Pay much attention to lecturer development with regard to skills, relevant expertise and classroom management and administration.
- Ensure the appointment of lecturers prior to the commencement of classes.
- Look into the College's Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) Schedule.
- Thorough monitoring of classes, lesson planning, preparation and presentation.
- Look into the possibility of classes starting at eight to accommodate students who travel from distant places.
- Ensure an effective Quality Management System (QMS).
- Employ a biometrics system for gate access control and class attendance.
- Capacitate the lecturers on the management of ICASS and human relations.

- Ensure adherence to policies, processes and procedures.
- Training of lecturers on diversity management.
- Set strict specifications when appointing the security company for the gate, including new technology devices that will assist them in searching the students when they enter the premises.
- Inform the enrolment targets to ensure that the enrolment targets from the Department are accommodated by the available infrastructure.
- Ensure that the process for the verification of marks is done to make sure that the students' marks that are captured in the system tally with the marks on the scripts.
- Communicate the strategic planning to all personnel and ensure implementation and compliance.
- Look into how the students from rural areas can be supported, both academically and socially.
- Implement a thorough Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) to ensure that the staff is rewarded.
- Ensure that the enrolment targets are in line with the available infrastructure and human resource.
- Involve all stakeholders during the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff to ensure that the processes are fair and just.

5.7. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The study might draw the attention of the DHET, the college management and other stakeholders in order to come up with interventions about the low completion rates at TVET Colleges.

5.8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher recommends that further research on the factors contributing to low completion rates at other TVET Colleges be conducted. This study was conducted at one campus at a TVET College in the North-West Province. The study can be expanded to other campuses and other TVET Colleges in other provinces to extend the scope and acquire more insight as low completion rates are a global concern.

Further studies could use a quantitative method in order to collect statistics using questionnaires and case studies. A comparative study could also be conducted to obtain a deep insight into the study.

5.9. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the completion rates challenge is still of great concern at the TVET Colleges. The above recommendations need passion, dedication, commitment and interest from the Department of Higher Education and Training, the college's senior management, lecturers, parents and students. This study sought to determine the ways in which the completion rates can be improved at the TVET College. The study also revealed the lack of effective policies, lack of effective Quality Management Systems (QMS) and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS).

The vision of the college is "a global institution of excellence surpassing community needs". This vision can be achieved through effective policies and processes, effective procedures and the involvement of all stakeholders. According to the participants, this is not the case. The impact of these processes and procedures can be measured through monitoring and evaluation.

It is hoped that this study will bring about change towards achieving the set strategic objectives and assist the college management and all relevant stakeholders in the higher education sector, especially the Technical Vocational (TVET) sector.

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Appendix A1

5.11. PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

10 No. 39583

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, 8 JANUARY 2016



higher education
& training
Department
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1:

APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1.	Title (Dr /Mr /Mrs /Ms)	MRS	
1.2	Name and surname	DOROTHY NTHAKO	
1.3	Postal address	P.O. Box 304 BRITS 0250	
1.4	Contact details	Tel	012 381 5700
		Cell	0834809579
		Fax	012 381 5708
		Email	478962299@mylife.unisa.ac.za
1.5	Name of institution where enrolled	UNISA	
1.6	Field of study	EDUCATION	
1.7	Qualification registered for	Please tick relevant option:	
		Doctoral Degree (PhD)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Master's Degree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Other (please specify)	

2. DETAILS OF THE STUDY

2.1	Title of the study
	FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW COMPLETION RATES OF NATIONAL CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL (NCV) STUDENTS AT A TVET COLLEGE IN THE NORTHWEST PROVINCE

2.2	Purpose of the study
	TO INVESTIGATE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO LOW COMPLETION RATES OF NATIONAL CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL (NCV) STUDENTS AT A TVET COLLEGE IN THE NORTHWEST PROVINCE.

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

3. PARTICIPANTS AND TYPE/S OF ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE COLLEGE

Please indicate the types of research activities you are planning to undertake in the College, as well as the categories of persons who are expected to participate in your study (for example, lecturers, students, College Principals, Deputy Principals, Campus Heads, Support Staff, Heads of Departments), including the number of participants for each activity.

		Expected participants (e.g. students, lecturers, College Principal)	Number of participants
3.1	Complete questionnaires	a) _____ b) _____ c) _____ d) _____ e) _____	
3.2	Participate in individual interviews	Expected participants a) 2 HODs b) Lecturers c) _____ d) _____ e) _____	Number of participants 2 2 _____ _____ _____
3.3	Participate in focus group discussions/ workshops	Expected participants a) Level 3 students b) Level 4 students c) _____ d) _____ e) _____	Number of participants 6 6 _____ _____ _____
3.4	Complete standardised tests (e.g. Psychometric Tests)	Expected participants a) _____ b) _____ c) _____ d) _____ e) _____	Number of participants _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
3.5	Undertake observations Please specify		
3.6	Other Please specify		

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES**4. SUPPORT NEEDED FROM THE COLLEGE**

<i>Please indicate the type of support required from the College (Please tick relevant option/s)</i>		
Type of support	Yes	No
4.1 The College will be required to identify participants and provide their contact details to the researcher.		X
4.2 The College will be required to distribute questionnaires/instruments to participants on behalf of the researcher.		X
4.3 The College will be required to provide official documents. <i>Please specify the documents required below</i>		X
4.4 The College will be required to provide data (<i>only if this data is not available from the DHET</i>). <i>Please specify the data fields required, below</i>		X
4.5 <i>Other, please specify below</i>		

5. DOCUMENTS TO BE ATTACHED TO THE APPLICATION

<i>The following 2 (two) documents must be attached as a prerequisite for approval to undertake research in the College</i>	
5.1	Ethics Clearance Certificate issued by a University Ethics Committee
5.2	Research proposal approved by a University

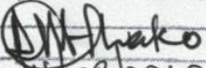
DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

6. DECLARATION BY THE APPLICANT

I undertake to use the information that I acquire through my research, in a balanced and a responsible manner. I furthermore take note of, and agree to adhere to the following conditions:

- a) I will schedule my research activities in consultation with the said College/s and participants in order not to interrupt the programme of the said College/s.
- b) I agree that involvement by participants in my research study is voluntary, and that participants have a right to decline to participate in my research study.
- c) I will obtain signed consent forms from participants prior to any engagement with them.
- d) I will obtain written parental consent of students under 18 years of age, if they are expected to participate in my research.
- e) I will inform participants about the use of recording devices such as tape-recorders and cameras, and participants will be free to reject them if they wish.
- f) I will honour the right of participants to privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and respect for human dignity at all times. Participants will not be identifiable in any way from the results of my research, unless written consent is obtained otherwise.
- g) I will not include the names of the said College/s or research participants in my research report, without the written consent of each of the said individuals and/or College/s.
- h) I will send the draft research report to research participants before finalisation, in order to validate the accuracy of the information in the report.
- i) I will not use the resources of the said College/s in which I am conducting research (such as stationery, photocopies, faxes, and telephones), for my research study.
- j) Should I require data for this study, I will first request data directly from the Department of Higher Education and Training. I will request data from the College/s only if the DHET does not have the required data.
- k) I will include a disclaimer in any report, publication or presentation arising from my research, that the findings and recommendations of the study do not represent the views of the said College/s or the Department of Higher Education and Training.
- l) I will provide a summary of my research report to the Head of the College/s in which I undertook my research, for information purposes.

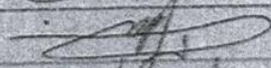
I declare that all statements made in this application are true and accurate. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.

SIGNATURE	
DATE	24/08/2019

DHET DBA: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

FOR OFFICIAL USE

DECISION BY HEAD OF COLLEGE

Please tick relevant decision and provide conditions/reasons where applicable	
Decision	Please tick relevant option below
1 Application approved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2 Application approved subject to certain conditions. <i>Specify conditions below</i>	
No conditions.	
3 Application not approved. <i>Provide reasons for non-approval below</i>	
NAME OF COLLEGE	ORBIT TVET COLLEGE
NAME AND SURNAME OF HEAD OF COLLEGE	Dika Mokoena
SIGNATURE	
DATE	2019/09/01

5.12. APPENDICES

Appendix A2: Ethical Clearance Approval

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/11/13

Ref: **2019/11/13/47896299/28/AM**

Name: Mrs MD Nthako

Student No.: 47896299

Dear Mrs MD Nthako

Decision: Approved

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs MD Nthako

E-mail address: 47896299@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 0834809579

Supervisor(s): Name: PROF VT ZENGELE

E-mail address: tzengele@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 0124294889

Title of research:

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW COMPLETION RATES OF NATIONAL
CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL (NCV) STUDENTS AT A TVET COLLEGE IN THE
NORTH-WEST PROVINCE**

Qualification:

MEd

Education

Management

Research Ethics Committee Recommendations:

None

Yours sincerely,

Name of the Chair: Prof AT Motlhabane

E-mail: motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-2840

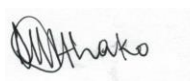
**Appendix B: Request permission letter- Head of Department: ORBIT TVET
COLLEGE**

I am Ms. MD Nthako, and I am a Masters student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). You are invited to volunteer for a research study. The aim of this study is to explore and investigate how the completion rates of NC (V) students in TVET Colleges in the North-West province can be improved.

This information leaflet is to help you decide if you would like to participate. Before you agree to take part in the study, you should fully understand what is involved. In case you come across uncertainties in taking part in the study, do not hesitate to contact me on the following numbers: Office (012) 3815739, Mobile number: 0834809579. The risks to you as a participant in this study are minimal. Although you will not receive an immediate benefit from this research, you and your colleagues may benefit from this research in future if it succeeds in recommending which policy aspects need to be redressed in respect to the NC (V) students not completing their qualifications.

Right Or Refuse To Withdraw

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate but prefer not to answer certain questions during the interview, you are free to do so. To protect your privacy, your real name will not be used in this study but you shall be named Participant A, B, C and so on. You are also free to terminate or withdraw from the interview at any time. You are free to ask questions before signing the consent form.



MD Nthako Date signed 29/10/2019

Researcher

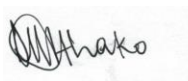
Appendix C: Request to participate in the study- Lecturer: ORBIT TVET COLLEGE

I am Ms. D Nthako, and I am a Masters student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). You are invited to volunteer for a research study. The aim of this study is to explore and investigate how the completion rates of NC (V) students in TVET Colleges in the North-West province can be improved.

This information leaflet is to help you decide if you would like to participate. Before you agree to take part in the study, you should fully understand what is involved. In case you come across uncertainties in taking part in the study, do not hesitate to contact me on the following numbers: Office (012) 3815739, Mobile number: 0834809579. The risks to you as a participant in this study are minimal. Although you will not receive an immediate benefit from this research, you and your colleagues may benefit from this research in future if it succeeds in recommending which policy aspects need to be redressed in respect to the NC (V) students not completing their qualifications.

Right Or Refuse To Withdraw

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate but prefer not to answer a certain question during the interview, you are free to do so. To protect your privacy, your real name will not be used in this study but you shall be named Participant A, B, C and so on. You are also free to terminate or withdraw from the interview at any time. You are free to ask questions before signing the consent form.



MD Nthako Date signed 29/10/2019

Researcher

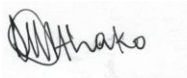
Appendix D: Request to participate in the study- Student: ORBIT TVET COLLEGE

I am Ms. MD Nthako, and I am a Masters student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). You are invited to volunteer for a research study. The aim of this study is to explore and investigate how the completion rates of NC (V) students in TVET Colleges in the North-West province can be improved.

This information leaflet is to help you decide if you would like to participate. Before you agree to take part in the study, you should fully understand what is involved. In case you come across uncertainties in taking part in the study, do not hesitate to contact me on the following numbers: Office (012) 3815739, Mobile number: 0834809579. The risks to you as a participant in this study are minimal. Although you will not receive an immediate benefit from this research, you may benefit from this research in the future if it succeeds in recommending which policy aspects need to be redressed in respect to the NC (V) students not completing their qualifications.

Right Or Refuse To Withdraw

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate but prefer not to answer a certain question during the interview, you are free to do so. To protect your privacy, your real name will not be used in this study but you shall be named Participant A, B, C and so on. You are also free to terminate or withdraw from the interview at any time. You are free to ask questions before signing the consent form.



MD Nthako Date signed 29/10/2019

Researcher

Appendix E: Consent form

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW COMPLETION RATES OF NC (V) STUDENTS AT A TVET COLLEGE IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCE

Participant's printed name _____

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study which seeks to investigate the factors contributing to low completion rates of NC (V) students at a TVET college in the Northwest province. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide to participate you must sign the form to show that you agree to take part.

When I participate in this research I understand that:

- I am free to participate in this study, end my involvement or to recall my consent to participate in this research study at any time. The information given up to the point of termination could still be used by researchers.
- An interview will be used to gather the information and I have consented to that.
- I am free to discontinue my participation should the need arise.
- I understand that this consent form, questionnaire and other material that may contain my identity or any clues thereof will be kept safe and accessed only by the researchers to protect my right to anonymity and that data will under no circumstances be reported in such a way as to reveal my identity.

Signature of the participant:.....Date signed...../...../2019

Signature of the researcher:... Date signed...29.../10...../2019

Appendix F: Request permission letter- Campus Manager: ORBIT TVET COLLEGE

Request For Permission To Conduct Research At ORBIT TVET College On The Research Topic: Factors Contributing To Low Completion Rates Of NC (V) Students At A TVET College In The North-West Province.

29 October 2019
The Campus Manager
ORBIT TVET College
Private Bag X 5060
Brits
0250
Tel: +27 12 3815700
Fax: +27 12 3815708

Dear Madam

I, Matshwenyego Dorothy Nthako am conducting research for the M.Ed. (Education Management), under the supervision of Professor VT Zengele, a Professor at the University of South Africa. The aim of the study is to investigate the factors that contribute to low completion rates of NC (V) students at TVET Colleges. Your College has been selected because it is entrusted with the responsibility of providing College policy direction of the higher education sector. The study will entail: (2) two HoDs, (2) two lecturers, (6) six students from Level 3 and (6) six students from Level 4.

Focus group interviews will be conducted with students and one-on-one interviews with HoDs and lecturers. The findings of the study may be used to improve completion rates and to better manage the identified challenges that lower the completion rates at TVET Colleges. The interviews may take a maximum of two weeks to be concluded. There are no foreseeable risks and no incentives for participating in the study. Key findings of the study will be made available to the Principal of ORBIT TVET College through a summary of the report on the study after successful completion.

Yours sincerely



MD Nthako Date signed 29/10/2019

Researcher

Appendix G: Request permission letter- Principal: ORBIT TVET COLLEGE

Request For Permission To Conduct Research At ORBIT TVET College On The Research Topic: Factors Contributing To Low Completion Rates Of NC (V) Students At A TVET College In The North-West Province.

29 October 2019,
The Principal
ORBIT TVET College
Cnr Fatima Bhayat & Bosch Street
Rustenburg
0300
Tel: +27 14 592 7014/ +27 14 597 5500
Fax: +27 14 592 7013

Dear Sir

I, Matshwenyego Dorothy Nthako am conducting research for the M.Ed. degree (Education Management), under the supervision of Professor VT Zengele, a Professor at the University of South Africa. The aim of the study is to investigate the factors that contribute to low completion rates of NC (V) students at TVET Colleges. Your College has been selected because it is entrusted with the responsibility of providing College policy direction of the higher education sector. The study will entail: (2) two HoDs, (2) two lecturers, (6) six students from Level 3 and (6) six students from Level 4.

Focus group interviews will be conducted with students and one-on-one interviews with HoDs and lecturers. The findings of the study may be used to improve completion rates and to better manage the identified challenges that lower the completion rates at TVET Colleges. The interviews may take a maximum of two weeks to be concluded. There are no foreseeable risks and no incentives for participating in the study. Key findings of the study will be made available to the Principal of ORBIT TVET College through a summary of the report on the study after its successful completion.

Yours sincerely



MD Nthako Date signed 29/10/2019

Researcher

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO HoDs

College:

Number of years in the college: -----

1. What is the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College?
2. What are the current completion rates at the TVET College?
3. What are the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NC (V) students at TVET Colleges in the North-West province?

Thank You For Your Participation.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO LECTURERS

College:

Number of years in the college: -----

1. What is the understanding of expected completion rates in the TVET College?
2. What are the current completion rates at the TVET College?
3. What are the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NC (V) students at TVET Colleges in the North-West province?

Thank You For Your Participation.

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO STUDENTS

College: -----

Level: -----

Sub-questions:

1. What are your expectations regarding your ability to complete your studies at this TVET college in record time?
2. What are the current completion rates at the TVET College?
3. What are the key strategies that can be put in place to improve the completion rates of NC (V) students at TVET Colleges in the North-West province?

Thank You For Your Participation.

tes at TVET colleges



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Match Overview

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25 January 2020

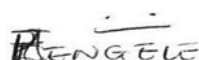
DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDIT

I declare that I have edited and proofread the Master of Education Dissertation entitled: **FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW COMPLETION RATES OF NATIONAL CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL (NCV) STUDENTS AT A TVET COLLEGE IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCE** by **Ms MD Nthako**.

My involvement was restricted to language editing: contextual spelling, grammar, punctuation, unclear antecedent, wordiness, vocabulary enhancement, sentence structure and style, proofreading, sentence completeness, sentence rewriting, consistency, referencing style, editing of headings and captions. I did not do structural re-writing of the content. Kindly note that the manuscript was formatted as per agreement with the client.

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